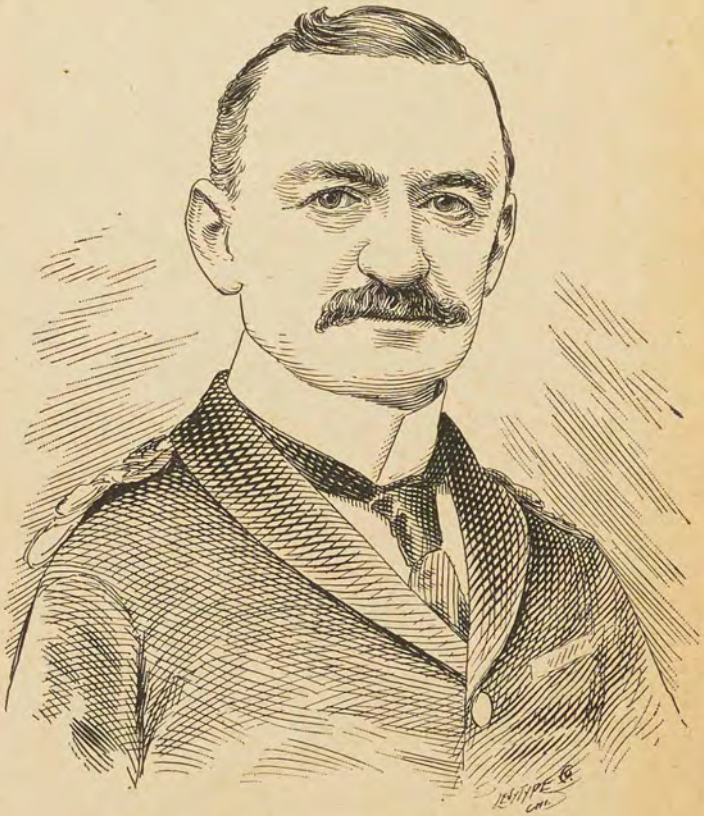
A YANKEE'S ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA



CECIL JOHN RHODES,
South Africa's Uncrowned King.

[For Sketch of Life and Work, See Page 221.]

Z. H. McDONALD 00070905

A YANKEE'S ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA

—BY—

CHARLES SIMPSON,

Author of

"Wild Life in the Far West," etc., etc.

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—BY—

H. DeLay.

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BARNEY BARNATO, THE "DIAMOND KING."
(For Biographical Sketch, see page 225.)

A YANKEE'S ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

It was a lovely afternoon in early spring; the warm, bright sun burst forth in all its splendor, awaking the flowers and all nature to a new and gorgeous life. The birds poured forth their glad, joyous songs of thanksgiving for the return of the beautiful flowers and the warm, genial days of Spring.

Upon this beautiful afternoon, and about two miles from the town of Kimberly, a solitary horseman had paused beside a spring of cool, sparkling water to quench his thirst.

"Ah," he mused, as he glanced away to the westward, "I really believe that we are going to have a storm. The air begins to feel so sultry and hot, so offensive—just such a feeling as bodes a coming tempest. If I were in Kansas now, I should say that we were going to have a cyclone. But they tell me that they have such terrible storms here, too."

Thus musing, he stood for a few minutes beside his tired horse, the very picture of health, of strength, of noble, young manhood. Not handsome, but with a face expressive of honor and kindness—a face that any one would like. A very giant in stature.

"Come, old fellow," he said, patting his horse's neck, "only two miles farther; then we will be at our future home. Ah," he mused, "I wonder how I shall like it?

Four grown up daughters! Proud, aristocratic; and, so they say, they are the belles of Kimberly, too. Ah, well, we shall see."

Just then, from down the road, the clatter of horse's hoofs upon the hard, dusty road was heard. A moment more, and amid a cloud of dust, a young lady, mounted upon a shaggy little pony, dashed around a bend in the road from behind a clump of timber and came galloping directly toward him.

After her, and almost beside her now, with its head moving threateningly above her, and with short, stubby wings beating the air fiercely, came a huge, male ostrich! The largest of his kind—a very giant among his species.

"Hello!" exclaimed the wayfarer as he watched the exciting race with an amused expression upon his face, little dreaming of the real danger that the young lady was in. "I wonder what the beastly thing means anyway?"

For an instant, they were obscured from view by a cloud of dust, and then, as a gust of wind swept the dust away, he beheld a scene which, in an instant, transformed the amused expression upon his face into one of intense anxiety and alarm. For, almost at that very instant, the huge foot of the enraged and vindictive bird shot forward like a thunder-bolt and landed full upon the flank of the shaggy little pony. Down he went as though he had been struck by a canon ball.

For a moment, there was a confused mass of shaggy pony, flying skirts and golden curls.

Like a hero of the chivalrous days of old, the way-



THE GIRL SEIZING THE OSTRICH BY THE FOOT. P. 19.

farer rushed to the rescue of the fallen, and now, doubly imperiled maiden.

Heedless of the vicious creature which, with head swaying to and fro threateningly while the little, bead-like eyes gleamed vindictively, seemed bent upon tramping the life out of the prostrate and helpless girl, the wayfarer darted forward to the rescue. But the enraged bird divining his intentions, raised his ponderous foot and aimed a blow full at the broad chest of his new enemy. Though the wayfarer, a veritable giant in stature, wiry and active as a cat, seeing his assailant's purpose, and knowing full well, from what he had already witnessed, the dangerous character of that fatal kick, sprang quickly aside, yet, quick as his movement had been, the monstrous foot grazed his shoulder, literally stripping his coat and vest from his back and sent him rolling in the dust.

"Quick! quick!" cried the girl, seizing the ostrich by the foot, as he returned and began tramping upon her again, totally ignoring the prostrate though by no means not vanquished wayfarer, "quick! get him by the neck, while I hold his foot so he can't kick you!" she cried, holding on for dear life.

Bewildered and confused by the terrible kick, the wayfarer struggled to his feet and rushed impetuously upon the hampered bird and seizing him by the neck, and exerting all his immense strength snapped it in twain. A few convulsive springs, and then the vanquished bird lay quite still in death.

"Are you hurt?" asked the wayfarer anxiously, as he assisted the girl to her feet.

"Oh, no, I think not," she replied. "Just a little bruised that's all, I guess. Oh, but he nearly kicked the breath out of me though," she said, and there was a comical expression upon her face, a mischievous twinkle in her large, blue eyes, as she pressed her hands to her sides and gasped for breath. "But how are you?" she asked. "He gave you a terrible kick."

"Oh, I am alive," he replied, "I have got a sprained ankle, maybe a broken rib or two, and am minus a coat and vest; I guess that that's about all."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the little Miss, shaking out her skirts, "he's nearly spoiled me. Here's a rip and there's a tare. O my! But where's my hat?" she asked, looking around for the missing article.

"Really now, I don't believe that you had any," ventured the wayfarer.

"Come to think of it, I guess I didn't," she replied with a laugh and casting a rogueish glance up into the plain, honest face of her new-found friend. Just a little color, just the shadow of a blush, came to her dimpled cheeks, as she met his keen, inquiring glance.

A fair picture, indeed, she made as she stood there before him; so shy, so modest; her long, golden hair, freed from its fastenings, hung in its rich profusion, like a veil of shining gold about her slight, graceful form. A picture of grace and loveliness, of simplicity and modesty, such as he had dreamed of.

The frank, outspoken admiration expressed in his honest gray eyes, brought a blush to her fair cheek.

"Beg pardon for my rudeness!" exclaimed the admirer. "Don't be offended, for I am only an awkward

boy, and, so they say, a bashful one, too. But let me introduce myself—Harry Lovejoy, at your service, young lady. And now may I ask your name? for we will certainly be the best of friends after this eventful meeting and rather informal introduction," he said, laughingly.

"Harry Lovejoy!" exclaimed the girl. "Then we are looking for you at home, if you are the Harry Lovejoy that has bought an interest in the mines with papa."

"Ah, then you are Miss Winterstine?" he said, interrogatively.

"Yes; that is, I am one of them," she replied. "There are four of us in all."

"Happy must be the man who possesses such a treasure! But which one of the young ladies are you, if I may ask?" he inquired.

"Oh, I am Tom," she answered, casting a sly, mischievious glance into his face.

"Tom!" he ejaculated, "what ever did they call you that for?"

"Don't you like Tom?" she asked, innocently.

"Yes, indeed I do!" he exclaimed quickly, looking down into her wide, wondering eyes.

"Oh, I —I meant—I meant the name," she stammered; and a hot blush suffused her cheek.

"Yes, yes, of course you did," he declared, quickly. "Yes, I like the name too," he said, and he looked into her sparkling eyes.

"Sir!" exclaimed Tom, raising her little brown hand threateningly, "you are a rogue!"

"Thank you, Tom, for the compliment," he laughed; "that's what they call me at home; but for mercy sake,

don't, please don't strike me with that little hand—I never could survive the blow, indeed I would rather be kicked by the ostrich."

"O such nonsense!" laughed Tom. "Come, let's go home—that is, I—I mean, if you are going—if you are the Mr. Lovejoy that father is expecting," she stammered, rather confused at her boldness. "Can you walk?" she asked, and the expression of her face changed from that of a perplexed sort of embarrassment to one of pity."

"Oh, I guess I can walk," he replied. "How far is it?"

"Two miles by road, but I never go that way. It's only a mile straight across. Take my arm, I can help you a little—that is if you don't mind, Mr. Harry," she said, innocently.

"Oh, I don't mind at all; thank you, Tom—Miss Winterstine," he corrected. "I am ever so much obliged!" And taking her arm, they set out toward Cliffside—the old homestead of the Winterstines.

"Shall we go across?" asked Tom.

"Yes," replied Harry, "let's go the nearest way. Oh, I wish those fool horses hadn't run off and left us," he groaned as he limped painfully along beside his little companion. "But you are sure you can find the way?" he asked. "It's beginning to get dark."

"Find the way!" and she looked up into his face with such a surprised, incredulous glance, as if surprised that any one should question her ability to find her way anywhere. "I have traveled the road hundreds of times," she replied. "No one would ask such a question of Tom Winterstine! But then, of course you don't know—"

"But I hope and trust that I may know her before long," he answered in an earnest tone.

"Oh, I really do believe that it is going to storm," cried Tom, changing the subject and looking away to hide her blushing cheeks, and noticing, for the first time, the dark clouds that were creeping swiftly toward the zenith.

So absorbed had they been with one another, that they were totally oblivious of all else. For, he found her to be the most charming companion that he had ever met. So frank, so simple in manner, and yet, with a mischievious coquetry that was always leading her into doing and saying things that piqued her proud and refined lady sisters, and for which they called her tom-boy and had, in early life, dubbed her Tom. And it was the first time in her life that she had ever met a fellow spirit —a real, open-hearted, plain, simple and genial fellow spirit, like her own, in the opposite sex. Somehow she was not afraid of him. The embarrassment usual with her upon meeting with young men, did not provoke her. The shyness, which her sisters called "awkwardness, which she would probably outgrow if she would only quit her romping and try to be a lady," was almost entirely absent.

"Ah, it does look like a storm," replied Harry. "Really, we must hurry up a little."

"We have such awful storms, too," ventured Tom, without displaying the least uneasiness or inclination to hurry, in spite of the fact that the storm was rapidly approaching them and darkness had already obscured the surrounding landscape.

On they trudged till they had reached the deepest, darkest part of the heavy wood-land, when the storm, which had hung for a moment above the tree tops, burst upon them in all it's mad fury.

Down before the rushing, roaring avalanche of wind and rain, the giant trees of the forest bowed and snapped like reeds in the winds.

Struggling on till they reached an old oak, they managed to drag themselves beneath it's spreading branches in hopes of gaining a little shelter. No longer able to keep upon their feet against the beating tempest, they crouched down behind the huge trunk of the old oak and waited.

The tree afforded them no shelter, for the tempest raged so fiercely that the rain drove in blinding torrents beneath the branches and beat relentlessly upon the shivering, half-drownded refugees.

"O, arn't this grand!" cried the half-drownded girl, looking up into the face of her companion, as she crouched a little closer beneath his broad shoulders, who with one strong arm around her slight form, was vainly striving to protect her from the beating torrent. "O, arn't it grand! but really I do believe that I will drown."

"Grand!" ejaculated Harry disdainfully. "Grand! it reminds me of the time when I was shipwrecked at sea. Grand! if I had had as sweet and prétty a companion then as I have now, it would have been just about as grand as this. I am sure it was no wetter."

And he drew the drenched and shivering form still closer.

For half an hour the storm raged in all its fury, then suddenly abated, leaving them in total darkness.

Drenched to the skin and shivering with cold, they again set out for home. Trudging on through the mud and water, which in many places reached to their knees and more, they finally halted, knee deep in the edge of a rushing torrent which swept on through the trees, completely barring their way.

"What now?" asked Harry in his perplexity; "where are we now?"

"Don't know," replied Tom innocently. Then in a doubtful tone she said—"Guess we are lost."

"O Tom!" cried Harry reproachfully; "I thought you knew the way all right."

"So did I," replied Tom.

"Don't you know where we are, Tom; can't you remember this stream?"

"No such a stream within forty miles of here!" declared Tom.

"But what shall we do, Tom?" queried Harry. "Come now, you are the captain."

"O dear! I do believe that we have been going the wrong way; and, O Mr. Harry! you are so lame—it's just too bad!" she exclaimed, heedless of her own suffering. "Come, I think I know the way now.

And she led off in the opposite direction from which they had been going.

In the course of half an hour they reached another torrent and again came to a stand.

"Now then!" ejaculated Harry.

"Oh, we are all right now," declared Tom. "I know where we are now. This is the little brook that runs

through the meadow. I come here after the cows every day; it's only a little ways home. Come on," she said, dauntlessly leading the way out into the rushing torrent.

"Look out, Tom!" warned Harry, as she came to a place where the water came nearly to her shoulders.

"O Harry!" she cried, as the rush of the water was about to carry her away, "help me!" And she held out her hands imploringly towards him.

Seizing her hands, Harry led her safely across to the other shore, and, in a little while, they were safely at home.

"Tom, Tom! for mercy sake child, where have you been?" cried her mother, seizing the drenched and dripping form in her arms and hugging and kissing her in spite of her wet, muddy clothes and forlorn appearance.

"O mamma! let me get my breath first," panted Tom. "Oh, I forgot, I—this is Harry—is Mr. Lovejoy," stammered Tom, blushing in her confusion at the looks of dismay and annoyance upon the faces of her three elder sisters.

"Mr. Lovejoy?" exclaimed old Mr. Winterstine, advancing and clasping the young man's hands. "Welcome, welcome, Harry Lovejoy," and he introduced him to his wife and then to the daughters. "Ah," he said as he came to little Tom, "I guess that you have already had an introduction; this is my boy—little Tom."

"Here, father," said the mother, let Mr. Lovejoy change his clothes, he can wear yours until his are dry."

And she gave him a suit of the old gentleman's clothes.

Soon arrayed in dry clothes, he returned to the sitting room, and in a few minutes was joined by Tom who, arrayed in a dainty evening dress, was more charming, if possible, than she was when Harry had first seen her.

"Here Tom," said the father, placing a chair before the fire and rather close to Harry's; "come and tell us what has happened. Don't be bashful, child," he said, stroking her golden curls lovingly.

In as few and simple words as possible, little Tom, with many blushes and no little embarassment, told the story of the battle with the ostrich and their journey home.

As she finished their supper was announced and together they sat down to the table and partook of a good, warm supper.

That night and, as for that, many nights after, Harry dreamed of the shy, sweet-faced, little Tom.

———:o:———

CHAPTER II.

LOVE.

Six months had passed since Harry had arrived at the Winterstine's. Six months of ceaseless toil; for Harry Lovejoy had come to the mines with the full determination to win his fortune, if, by patient toil and a strict attention to business, such an object could be accomplished. But, after these six months of unremitting labor he found that he was poorer than when he came.

"Oh, it's no use," he mused dejectedly, as he wandered away down by the little brook. "It's no use, everything has gone against me—everything, even little Tom! Ah, I wonder," he said, as he strolled along to where the brook emptied into a beautiful little lake which nestled so cosily among the hills, "I wonder what the trouble is with Tom? I have done nothing to merit her displeasure, yet she shuns me, she avoids me in every way possible. I don't believe that it is her own choice —some one else has something to do with this. Those half-sisters of hers—Ah," he exclaimed, as the low, musical notes of some one whistling fell upon his ears, "ah, that's Tom; I wonder where she is? if I can find her, I will have an explanation of this affair. Oh, but I would like to catch her off here alone! I will make her tell," he exclaimed passionately.

Listening, he located the place from whence the whistling came—a place far up on the face of a high cliff which overlooked the lake.



HE EMERGED FROM A THICKET AND CAME SUDDENLY UPON THE UNSUSPECTING GIRL. P. 29.

"Yes, she is up there," he mused, and in a moment he was making his way along a narrow foot-path which led up along the cliff. A few minutes later he emerged from a dense thicket and came suddenly upon the unsuspecting girl as she lay at full length upon a mossy rock and gazing away across the lake, and so deeply absorbed in her own thoughts that she did not hear the approaching footstep.

"Tom," said Harry, advancing toward her, "may I come for just a little while? I want to talk with you, please."

"No, no," she exclaimed, rising quickly, "come, let's go home; it's getting late, mother will scold!"

"No," declared Harry, effectually barring the way. "No, you don't evade me this time! O Tom, why do you treat me so cruelly? What have I done to merit your displeasure? Tell me, Tom, that I may ask your forgiveness!" he pleaded, and clasping the girl in his strong arms, he held her.

"What have you done?" she cried. "O Harry, I can't, I won't tell! Let me go, please do," she pleaded, struggling to free herself. "Let me go!" she cried, bursting into tears.

"Tom," said Harry, reproachfully releasing her. "Tom—" but she turned and, without heeding his call, fled down the path toward home.

Hastening home, she tried to avoid the family and escape to her own room, but the ever-watchful eye of her mother detected her and she called out—

"Tom, Tom, come here, I want you, my dear."

In silence she obeyed her mother's call.

"Tom," said the mother tenderly, as the weeping girl came up to her, and kneeling beside her, buried her tear-stained face in her mother's lap. "Tom, you are too young to be thinking of love; you are but a child yet, Tom; you know nothing of such things; it will soon wear away and then you won't care. Come, my litte girl," said the mother, stroking her daughter's golden curls affectionately, "give up this nonsense."

"O mother!" moaned Tom, "I can't help it, I love him, but, of course, I must give him up to Lucy—she wants him, and of course, I—"

"But Tom, do you think that he loves you? Isn't it Lucy that he wants—that he would be the most apt to choose for a wife? Think, Tom, you are but a child yet. I couldn't spare my little Tom, even if he does love her. No, no, Tom, you are too young—it is Lucy that he wants."

"Oh, it makes no difference what I want, I must give up everything to my older sisters; and I am expected to do it without complaint!" she cried bitterly. "You call me a baby and tell me I don't know anything about love, when you know that you wasn't any older than I am when you married papa!"

"Tom, Tom!" cried the mother, a little frightened at the girl's impetuous words and manner, for she had always been willing to give up to her older sisters and always with such a meek and submissive spirit that such a sudden and unexpected ontburst of passion frightened her gentle, loving mother.

"O Tom!" she cried, this is not my little Tom;" and she raised the girl's head and gazed down into her dark,

blue eyes inquiringly. "Ah," she murmured, "I don't know, perhaps that he does love her. I don't wonder that he should."

For several weeks things went on as usual at the Winterstine's.

Tom treated her lover with an indifference that would have done credit to an older and more experienced person than she.

"I will show him," she cried, "that though he may break my heart, he can't make a fool of me! Ah, there he comes now with Lucy; they have been out boating on the lake, I suppose," she said, struggling to keep back the tears and turning away to avoid them.

"Look," laughed Lucy, "Tom was always so bashful! I wonder if she will ever get over it?"

But Harry made no answer; he saw and understood all but too well the meaning of that act. She had avoided him so much of late, that it was very seldom that he had an opportunity of speaking to her alone. So rarely, indeed, and so constrained had become their meeting, so cold and uninteresting their conversations, that he felt rather relieved than otherwise when he learned that she was going on a visit to her aunt Jane's, who lived some fifty miles to the north, at the little town of Perth.

"It will be rather hard for us to get along without her and I hardly know how I can manage, but it will be better for her, poor child," said the mother in her pity for the forlorn little Tom. "She loves Harry and I don't know but he loves her—he acts kinder queer of late."

"What!" exclaimed the father, "my little Tom wanting to get married? Good heavens! who ever put such a foolish notion into her head? Ah, it's Harry, of course; I might have known it. Yes, yes; I see, I see it all now! But mother, why don't you let her get married if she wants to? What are you going to send her away for?"

"She wants to go and I think it will be better for her to go. Harry can't marry both of the girls, even if he wanted to, and Lucy claims him; so, I think, it's better for Tom to go away."

"O ho! so the girls are quarreling to see which shall have him, are they?" said the old man. "Well well! that's the way they do it now, is it? he mused and he looked back to a time some sixteen years ago and remembered the bitter rivalry between him and his partner over the fair, sweet-faced woman who is now his wife, and the mother of little Tom. "Ah, yes," he mused, "it ain't as it used to be."

The day had arrived when Tom was to set out for her Aunt Jane's and everything was ready. The cart stood before the door in waiting, while the father, who was to drive her over was mounted upon the seat and waited impatiently.

"Tom," said the mother, clasping the girl in her arms and kissing her, "don't feel so bad; if Harry loves you, it will come out all right; if he don't, you don't want anything to do with him. Don't you want to see him before you go? He wants to see you."

"Oh, I can't, I can't!" she sobbed, "let me go before he comes—papa is waiting for me." And she ran

quickly down the steps and climbed into the cart and taking the reins from her father's hand, she drove away.

"Ah," mused Harry, as she drove off without giving him even a parting glance, ah, I understand now, better than ever before, the meaning of all this. I don't believe that Tom is to blame for it; some one else is engineering this business for her, but it won't work."

Days and weeks passed swiftly by, still the prospect of gaining his fortune grew less and less. Harry was thoroughly discouraged now.

"There's no use," he said one evening some two months after Tom had left; "everything goes against me now! I believe that I will go up to the new mines at Amboy and go to prospecting."

It's very uncertain business," said Mr. Winterstine, after Harry had told him of his intention; "but then—ah well, perhaps that you had better go for a while at least, I can get along all right—perhaps you can do better up there," he said, for he thought that he divined the young man's purpose in going there. "Yes, yes, let's see, it will be but little out of your way to go by Perth, as it's only ten miles from Perth to Amboy. But prospecting is uncertain, thousands lose where one gains."

"Well, I have nothing to lose and everything to gain," reasoned Harry. "Perhaps I may be the thousandth man; at any rate, I will try it."

So it was arranged, and a few days later he bade good-by to Cliffside and his many friends and set out to seek his fortune in other fields.

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CHAPTER III.

AT AUNT JANE'S.

Nearly two months had passed since Tom's arrival at Aunt Jane's. Two busy months they were too, for little did Tom care for company; so she set herself to work with a will and, instead of being the careless, frivolous girl that Aunt Jane had expected, she settled down into a quiet, busy little woman.

The change was so sudden and complete that even Tom herself was no little surprised as she found herself going about her work in that quiet, peaceful resignation which came to her. It was a surprise, for she thought that her heart was broken and she could never be happy again.

Aunt Jane, with that peculiar discerning power, or instinct, as the case may be, which some elderly ladies —and as for that matter, some younger ones too—possess, had discovered the cause of little Tom's exile.

"Yes, yes," she said, "it's love, of course. A little time will cure her. Love, like a flame, will burn up brightly for a time, consuming everything; but when the object of one's affections is removed, it will flicker and die. Ah yes, a plenty to do to keep her busy and to keep her from having the blues, is all that she needs with a little time to effect a cure."

Aunt Jane was one of those busy ladies who believe that every one should have an object in life and should follow that object perseveringly, unremitingly, let come



HER SOFT ARMS STOLE LOVINGLY AROUND HIS NECK. P. 37.

what would. So it pleased her imensely to see little Tom take so kindly and resignedly to her busy little home.

Kind, old soul! Her heart went out to the little sufferer as only a kind, generous heart could do, giving and doing many little things, as she said—

"Just to please her and cheer her up a little, for it's lots of help, you know."

But a change began to steal over the scene. Silas Coffden, a wealthy land owner, had seen the sweet, shy face of little Tom and was deeply interested. Perhaps that his interest was deepened by the peculiar name which she bore. Be that as it may, he wondered within himself, that he would win this charming little woman for his wife. So it happens that we find him, ere long, a regular visitor at Aunt Jane's.

Wealthy beyond all calculation, he was, in the eyes of Aunt Jane, a very desirable suitor. But not so with little Tom, for she looked upon his suit with a feeling of utter disgust.

"No, no," she declared to herself, "I can never love any one but Harry."

More frequent became his visits, and more pressing and ardent his wooing, till, at last, driven to desperation, Tom used every means within her power and resorted to every possible scheme to elude him and to give him to understand that his case was hopeless, but all to no avail.

About this time—something over two months since she had left home—a letter came from home, bringing the sad news that they were financially ruined, and that

they were soon to be turned out of Cliffside and left homeless. A mining speculation in which Mr. Winterstine had invested not only every cent of his own property but that of Harry Lovejoy's as well, had resulted in a complete and disastrous failure.

Left penniless, they were coming to Aunt Jane's to live till they could settle upon a new home.

Aunt Jane threw open wide her doors to them, and gave them such a welcome as only a generous-hearted aunt and sister could give.

"Though," she declared to herself, "I know they'll bring me deal of trouble. The other girls arn't a bit like Tom. Stuck up—aristocratic, they call it—they feel themselves above work, for, bless their hearts, they were brought up that way and arn't to blame for it! But, thank stars! two of 'em are married and have homes of their own, so there's only Lucy, and they do say she's the most stuck up of all; but she will have to come to it now—she'll have to work."

This misfortune fell heavily upon them and, it seemed, there was no hope for their future but a life of poverty. Mr. Winterstine was old and feeble and totally unable to work. In his extremity he would have to rely wholly upon his family for support, and, save little Tom, not one member of that family could even support themselves. And now, to make matters still worse, and soon after their arrival at Aunt Jane's, the mother, who had always been the mainstay of the family, took sick and, after a short illness, died.

Thus, some two weeks after their arrival at Aunt Jane's, we find the doubly striken family.

Alas for poor little Tom! who had laid so many brilliant plans for the future, who had suffered so much in the past few months, her troubles had only begun.

"Oh, what shall I do?" moaned the bereaved parent. "What will become of us? O Tom!" he groaned.

"O papa!" cried Tom, and her soft arms stole lovingly around his neck, while her warm, red lips pressed his cold cheek. "Papa, can't you cheer up a little? Don't feel so down hearted papa dear, you have little Tom yet and she won't see you suffer!"

"Poor, little Tom!" moaned the old man. "Poor, little Tom! What can she do?"

"There are many, many things that I can do, papa!" cried the brave girl. "If only Lucy could get something to do, I could make a living for you and I."

Just then, the door bell rang and in a moment more, Silas Loffden entered and confronted the bereaved pair.

"Ah, Mr. Loffden," said the old man, "it has been many years since I saw you—you were but a lad then. Ah, yes, I remember your father," he said, and there was a dark frown upon the old man's brow at the remembrance of old Silas Loffden.

"Let the past be forgotten, Mr. Winterstine," implored young Loffden. "Hold me not responsible for my father's misdeeds. Believe me, I hold but the very best of feelings toward you, and I have come to you in your extremity, offering, as best I can, to right the wrongs which my father has done you. Mr. Winterstine, I have come to offer you a means of escape from your present dilemna—a means whereby you can regain Cliffside and yet lead a peacful and happy life, and your

daughter's can be provided for, as becomes their station in life. This is my offer:

"I love your daughter, little Tom—wait, don't answer yet, let me speak—don't answer yet, consider what I offer—I will return Cliffside to you free of all incumbrance and will fix an annuity upon you for life. Your daughters shall retain their present position in society—all of this will I give you upon our wedding day," declared Loffden.

For some time the old man sat in silent wonder and amazement, while Tom, none too bold at best, sat in dumb consternation.

"Can it be possible," thought the old man, "that this can be the son of old Silas Loffden, my most bitter and unrelenting enemy?"

"Miss Winterstine," continued Loffden, "I love you as no other man can love, and I offer you what no other man can offer; can you accept it? Ah, I will not urge you now, all I ask is for you to consider my offer; promise me that you will consider my proposal, and I will hope for happiness. For, in your love, I will be the happiest man living."

"What do you say, Tom?" asked her father, scarcely yet recovered from his astonishment.

"O I— I don't—I can't, I can't!" wailed the poor girl in dispair.

"Think Tom, think, that's a dear little girl," urged her aunt earnestly, "just think, wealth, position, happiness and, perhaps, even the life of you father depends upon your answer. Think, Tom, it was this blow of misfortune that killed your mother; shall it kill your

father also? O Tom! think how much depends upon your answer to Mr. Loffden."

Confused and bewildered, Tom could not think, could not hardly realize the nature of the questions which she was asked to consider. So young, the thought of marriage had scarcely entered her mind. And then, there was Harry, whom she loved so dearly. O, what could she do? She loved Harry and she could love no other. Should she blight her own young life to give pleasure and luxury to her sister? for, she reasoned—

"I can take care of papa; oh, I know I can."

"What do you think, Tom, my dear little girl?" asked the father anxiously.

"O papa!" she cried, throwing her arms around his neck and hiding her pale, frightened face on his shoulder, "I don't know what to do—what to think—I—I can't—I don't—O dear! O dear!" she cried, "give me a little time!"

"Will you give me a little hope by promising to consider my offer?" asked Loffden.

"Yes, yes, I will think of it!" answered Tom.

"Thanks, thanks, my dear Miss Winterstine." murmured Loffden, and bidding them good evening, he left the house.

"O Tom!" cried Aunt Jane, "just think, Silas Loffden is the richest and handsomest man in all this country! You can't refuse him, Tom; it's an offer of a lifetime; its—"

"O Aunty!" cried Tom, "I don't love him—I can't love him, O I can't, I can't! I love—I—I—"

"You love that poverty-stricken Harry Lovejoy!" cried Aunt Jane, in a rage. "O, you ungrateful little—" But Tom had fled to her own room.

CHAPTER IV.

GRETCHEN.

"O, what shall I do?" wailed Tom, as she wandered away down by the little brook which trailed its shining course through her aunt's meadow. It was the next evening after Loffden's proposal, and she had gone out and wandered away down into the meadow alone, as was her wont when her heart was troubled; "O, what shall I do? Shall I marry him, when I love another? Marry for money that my sister may live in luxury, while I, broken hearted, to die in misery, in wretchedness? for I can't live with him and love another—O, I can't, I can't!"

"I will tell you what to do!" came a low, passsionate voice close behind her, "Don't marry Silas Loffden!"

With a cry of terror, Tom turned and beheld a wretched, miserable looking girl standing close behind her.

"Who are you?" asked Tom, recovering from her fright, when she beheld the wretched girl.

"Nobody!" cried the girl bitterly, "but I was somebody once. Yes, as light hearted and as free as you. Silas Loffden won my love and I became his happy bride, or I supposed that I had. A few months of happiness and then, O God! I was cast away for another, and when I followed him, he told me that I was no wife. My baby lies buried over there at Amboy and I, an outcast, without home and without friends will, I pray



THE CLINCHED FIST DESCENDED UPON THE DEFENSELESS GIRL. P. 44.

God, soon follow her. Heed my warning, beautiful girl—shun Silas Loffden as you would a viper!"

When Tom returned to her home that evening, pale and careworn, there was a set, determined look in her dark, blue eyes, that sent a chill of disappointment to the hearts of her aunt and sister, who welcomed her with an anxious, inquiring glance as she entered the cosy little sitting-room at Aunt Jane's.

Throwing her hat upon the table, Tom flung herself into a chair by the open window and sat gazing intently at the sun as it went down behind the western hills like a great, red ball of fire. Those awful words of warning uttered by poor Gretchen still ringing in her ears—"Shun Silas Loffden as you would shun a viper!"

No one had the courage to question her, for each felt what the answer would be. Upon Aunt Jane's face was an expression of utter disgust, of the most abject and wretched disappointment. The sister was disappointed and piqued beyond discription. But there was one who looked over and beyond it all, to whose mind the thought of other things than those which concerned their immediate prosperity and comfort—that one was the father.

With feeble, tottering steps, he walked over to the girl's side and bending down till his snow-white locks mingled with the golden tresses of little Tom, he kissed her pale cheek and whispered:

"God bless you, Tom, you will not marry Silas Loffden!"

"O you ungrateful little hussy!" fairly screamed Aunt Jane, while Lucy cried out in her rage and disappointment—

"You consummate little idiot, to let such a chance go! You deserve to be poor—to have to go to the poor-house! Oh, what shall we do, what shall we do?" cried the disappointed Lucy, hysterically.

"Marry him yourself!" retorted Tom, thoroughly aroused now.

"Marry him myself!" screamed the enraged Lucy, "Marry him myself! yes, I would—I would marry him or anybody else to save my father, my poor, old father from the workhouse, from a pauper's grave! Yes, if I had your pretty face, I would marry him—I would show you what it is to be grateful to our poor, old father for the love he has shown us! I wouldn't let this wretched poverty kill him as it has your mother, for it was that that worried her to death!"

"O you ungrateful little hussy!" again cried Aunt Jane; "you shall leave my house—not a day shall you stay under my roof if you refuse to marry Silas Loffden! Ungrateful! La, that's just the way with girls now-a-days; work and toil for them, and then, when one is old and can't work any longer, they won't raise their hand to help one!" and she flung herself upon the sofa in a fit of hysterical weeping.

Poor, generous, kind-hearted, little Tom, without a word in her own justification, and to escape the cruel words of abuse from her aunt, fled away to her own little room in the attic—a room which she had fitted up for a studio, where she put in her spare moments painting.

* * * * *

Two days had passed, and Silas Loffden, impatient for his answer, had set out for Aunt Jane's. Mounted

upon his powerful, coal-black horse, he went thundering down the road which led across his broad acres, dotted here and there with its rich and beautiful little farms, orchards and vineyards tilled by his many tenants.

Dashing through a beautiful grove of nature's own planting, he came to a small stream which wound its graceful, shining course through the meadow above and entered a deep, dark forest below.

At the bridge which spanned the river, stood, what once must have been a beautiful, graceful girl; but now, as she stood there with disheveled hair, with garments tattered and torn, pale and haggard, she looked the very picture of hopeless despair.

Reining his horse quickly beside the wretched figure, Loffden dismounted and seizing the girl roughly by the arm, he cried in a hoarse passionate tone:

"You here? In the name of God and the devil do you intend to taunt me, to dog my steps even here and at this time of all other? Darn you, Gretchen Beers, if you interfere with me here, your life shall pay the penalty! Do you hear?"

"Hear!" she cried; "Do you think that your threats have any terror for me? No, Silas Loffden, you may do your worst; I fear not your threats and I swear by the great God who rules on High that you shall not drag another innocent girl down to ruin and shame, if the raising of my feeble voice in warning will prevent it? Ha, ha, hound of hell, do your worst! I have already warned her. Death has no terrors for me—yes, yes, strike me if you will, send me to my little babe that lies buried over at Amboy—yes, strike!" she cried, fearless of the uplifted arm. "The dark river rolls at my feet; let

me lie there; it will be a better bed, far better than I have known for many a long, weary day. It will be the kindest act of your life to the girl who gave you the love of her pure, young heart, who gave up home, friends, honor—everything for your vile pleasure! Yes, yes, take my life if you will, it will be a fitting consumation of your hellish deed! Strike, villain, for I have warn—"

Swift as a thunder-bolt the clinched and uplifted fist of the infuriated and thwarted Loffden descended upon the half bare bosom of the defenseless and wretched girl. Without a murmur, the poor creature went down and disappeared 'neath the dark, cold waters of the river which rolled at her feet.

"O God!" cried Loffden, as the girl disappeared, "what have I done?"

Just then, the clatter of horses' hoofs fell upon his ear, and down the road, he saw the tall form and broad shoulders of Harry Lovejoy mounted upon an ivory-gray horse and riding directly toward him.

"God!" muttered Loffden, "I wonder if that Lovejoy saw me when I struck that girl? Heavens! whatever possessed me to do it? But the deed is done," he muttered, as he mounted his coal-black horse and rode swiftly away. "The deed is done—I am rid of her."

A half hour later, this cold-hearted villain whose soul was stained with the life blood of an unfortunate maiden, stood before the guiltless, innocent and beautiful little maid—Tom Winterstine—and asked her to be his wife.

Poor Tom! How her little heart fluttered and sunk, as if to escape some terrible doom within the depths of her fair, heaving bosom, as she answered—

"No!" and fell fainting into her father's arms.



SHE FOUND HERSELF CLASPED IN HARRY'S STRONG ARMS. P. 50.

CHAPTER V.

CHICKEN-HEARTED TOM.

A mingled feeling of disappointment and disgust rankled in the bosoms of the inmates of Aunt Jane's since Tom had refused to sell herself for the pleasure and profit of others—had refused her one "great offer of a life-time. But not less surprised and disappointed, in fact fairly "knocked out," was Silas Loffden. That she should refuse him, was a thing that had never occurred to his conceited mind.

"Refuse me? pooh! the idea of a girl standing upon the brink of poverty, refusing an offer of marriage that would make her the wealthiest lady in all the Cape countries!"

But little did he dream of the true nature of the proud, noble spirit of little Tom.

His dark, guilty soul recoiled from the pure-hearted girl and a chill of consternation seized his vile heart as that one little "no," loud and clear, fell from the pale lips of little Tom.

Recoiling at this unexpected answer, he muttered a fearful oath as he dashed from the house and rode swiftly away.

"Curse that wretch!" he hissed, "Curse you Gretchen Beers! But you will bother me no more. If I only knew whether that Lovejoy saw anything that might lead to her discovery—curse him anyway, why need he to happen along just at that time? If I only knew—but he can't prove it! Ah," he ejaculated, as a new idea seem-

ed to occur to his troubled mind, "what is he doing to-night? What business brings him here? Where is he? Where did he go? Darn him anyway! But I don't believe that he knows anything of the girl—curse him I say! And curse old Winterstine, too; I believe that he is more than half to blame for that Tom-fools refusal to marry me! Ah, but we shall see! Almighty now, but that girl shall marry me! She shall see the day that she will be only too glad to do it."

Tom, after recovering from her swoon, crept away to her own little bed and soon had cried herself to sleep.

Days and weeks passed—days of suffering, days of hardship and toil for the brave girl, days that had transformed the careless, light-hearted, head-strong little Tom into a thoughtful, industrious and patient little woman. "The man of the family," as her father loved to call her. Even Aunt Jane had repented of her cruel word and, with tears, had besought Tom's forgiveness.

Tom had become now to devote all of her spare moments, in fact nearly all her time to painting—an accomplishment which she possessed to a very high degree—and her rare gems of art had become almost the sole dependance of the unfortunate family.

Every day she could be seen wandering about the country on her sketching tours and looking wishfully away toward the distant mountains.

"Oh, how I would like to go up into the hills and mountains," she said, "if I only dared; I could find such beautiful scenery up there. Oh, if I only had some one to go with me." But, in that wild, half savage, half civilized country, situated as it was upon the border be-

tween civilization and savagery, it was not safe—she dared not venture far.

And then there was Loffden—Silas Loffden, whose handsome face and evil eyes haunted her dreams day and night.

He was still a constant visitor at Aunt Jane's. Many times and oft had Tom caught his eye devouring her, as it were, with such a strange, significant expression in them that it sent a chill of terror to her poor little heart.

"Oh, I don't know what makes me be such a little coward—I'm so afraid. 'Chicken-hearted,' everybody calls me, and so bashful—oh, I wish I was brave like Lucy and the other girls; they can all have good times at parties and balls, at boating and riding, while I have to work all day and am so 'bashful and awkward,' as Lucy says, that nobody cares for me. But I don't care!" she declared, with a stamp of her little foot, "If I can't have Harry, I won't have anybody! O, how I hate that wicked Loffden!" Yet, to keep peace in the family, she dared not express her feelings. She avoided him, that was all she could do. But in doing this she had unintentionally, avoided every one else as well, till she had, so everybody said, "become so bashful that she would faint if a young man was to ask her for her company" to some of the many parties and picnics.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Lucy, upon one of the occasions. "Why Tom would faint dead away if some young fellow should kiss her at a game of forfeit. She runs away and hides when any one comes there."

It was about this time that Harry Lovejoy paid his

first visit to the Winterstine's after their great misfortune.

He was welcomed by all in the most cordial manner. Even bashful, little Tom sat in her corner by the fireplace and listened to the story of his wanderings among the hills and mountains in search of fortune. Many were the questions asked and answered—ah, yes, and many were the admiring glances cast in the direction of the sweet-faced little Tom as she sat so quietly and as far back in the shadow of her corner as she possibly could.

That evening, some two hours after Harry's arrival, Loffden paid his usual visit; but when he saw young Lovejoy there, a dark frown clouded his handsome face and his manner became cold, his conversation, usually free and easy, became constrained and uninteresting.

Harry did not like the man—to say that he hated, loathed, abhorred him, would but feebly express the feeling of utter contempt and loathing toward him; for, he knew the story of poor Gretchen, and it was he that had sent her to warn little Tom, satisfied in his own mind that Tom Winterstine would never wed other than a true, honorable man. He had a suspicion, too, of that awful tragedy at the bridge, yet he could not say for sure—he could not swear to it. Satisfied in own mind, in his own heart, yet he could not bring sufficient evidence to convict Loffden.

In a few minutes after the entrance of Silas Loffden, Tom went out—she always crept away, generally to her little room in the attic; but upon this night chance, perhaps, decreed it that Silas Loffden should bar this avenue of escape against her, perhaps he designed it him-

self, at any rate he sat with his back against the door that led to the chamber and Tom, "chicken-hearted Tom," could not muster up sufficient courage to ask him to move, and as he showed no disposition to allow her to pass, she choose the only means of escape and so, quietly, she slipped from the room and went out into the garden.

Harry had noted the act and soon after she had gone out, as was natural, he followed her. Going out into the garden, he soon found her out; and, though she tried to slip away and make her escape back to the house, he soon stood before her. Cornered at last, she was compelled to surrender—an unconditional surrender, too. How her faint, guileless little heart fluttered, as if to escape from the throbbing bosom, as she looked up into the plain honest face and deep, gray eyes of this great, big fellow, towering a whole head shoulders above her.

"Ah, Tom," he said, in his deep, kindly voice, "may I come, may I speak with you?" and there was such a tone of pleading in his low, soft words.

"If you wish," murmured Tom, with a desperate effort to choke down her sobs. For, after all her brave resolutions to meet him and show him by her indifference and composure that she was a woman not to trifled with, she saw that her courage was failing her, that her good resolutions had vanished and she stood completely at his mercy, completely in the power of his strong will. She had felt that feeling of utter helplessness before, and she realized that she was perfectly powerless to resist; but she did not fear him. There was that in those honest, gray eyes that told her that she need have no fear.

"O Tom!" cried Harry, in a low, passionate tone, "Oh, why have you treated me so cruelly? I—"

"Stop! stop!" cried Tom, all her old self returning, "stop!" and raised her delicate little hand threateningly.

"Don't, please don't strike me with that little hand, I never could survive the blow; indeed, I would rather be kicked by an ostrich!" he exclaimed, looking down into her wide, blue eyes.

"O Harry!" she murmured, burying her blushing face in her hands and bursting into tears; for she remembered their first meeting; she remembered when he had spoken those same words to her once before; she remembered the many happy days which they had passed together—days of bliss, days that brought the first awakening of love's young dream, days that she never expected to see again. But now, as she stood beside him—the loved, ideal image of her maidenly dreams—her heart was filled with hope.

"Can it be that it was my fault? that it is me and not Lucy that he wants? O Harry!" she cried, "forgive me if I have done wrong, if I have been cruel, for I didn't mean to—O, I didn't! I thought—I didn't—"

But she could say no more, for she found herself clasped in Harry's strong arms, while his passionate kisses closed her lips.

For one blissful moment she yielded to his close, passionate embrace. So closely folded in those strong arms, that it seemed to little Tom that he was bent upon ending her life then and there. But the Allwise, fore-seeing the necessity, had built little Tom of the finest material, and each and every rib was warranted to stand all needful pressure.

Happy, happy little Tom.



"Eat that and then go to sleep." P. 60

CHAPTER VI.

CHICKEN-HEARTED TOM.

Just at this moment—this the happiest moment of these two young lives—but just why it should have been at this moment, this of all others, the very moment when they ought to have been left severely alone, safely veiled from prying eyes—that moment when the wayfarer upon that broad road so many have traveled, so many will continue to travel in spite of the many haps and mishaps, which leads one down through the beautiful meadows where blooms the rose and the lily, where grows the wheat and the corn, where everything is common-place; from whence we can turn back, down across the sparkling rills, along the babbling brook-side to the foot of the hills where the shadows of doubt begin; and then away up in the mountains of passion, where the lightnings flash, where the torrents roar, where the avalanche sweeps, where precipices yawn—in whose dark and unfathomable depths lie buried the wreck of human hearts; away up among the mountain peaks of love, upon whose summits the gates stand ajar inviting one to enter and partake of the fruit—not the forbidden fruit, ah, no!—the fruit which, to that hungered wayfarer, brings to him the very consumation of all earthly bliss, from whence no man can turn back, nor woman should—just at this moment, I say, this moment when no mortal eye had business to pry, Silas Loffden, the last man on earth who should have seen, appeared upon the scene.

How it happened that he chanced to come upon them at this most inopportune moment, I will not undertake to say. Perhaps that he entertained some slight suspicion, then again, perhaps that he did not; however Silas Loffden stood before the lovers.

"Ah! oh! a thousand pardons!" he exclaimed in well feigned surprise; and he turned quickly and walked away.

"Ah," he muttered in a voice choked with passion, as he strode swiftly away, "ah, the cat's out of the bag now! O, ho! so it's young Lovejoy is it, my pretty bird, that stands between you and I? Ah, well, he's not the first man that has stood in my way, nor will his taking off be the first person whom I have been called upon to remove. Out of my way, you cussed American!" he hissed between his clinched teeth. "A hundred lives shall not deter me! No, no. Almighty, but I will have that girl though I have to wade in blood to gain her! I will stir up the natives against the settlement—and a very easy matter will it be too, for they are almost upon the point of an out-break even now. The hope of plunder, together with a promised reward, and they will sweep down upon the settlement, and then—ah, yes, my sweet little beauty, I will be there. Oh, but you shall see the day that you will be glad to marry me; that you shall go down upon those dainty, little knees and beg and pray me to fulfill the promise, but it shall not be. I will teach you that Silas Loffden is not to be trifled with! Love you! Ah, yes, I love you! Ha, ha! yes, I love as I loved Gretchen. I will marry you as I married Gretchen—by a promise; and then—ah, but we shall see!" and fairly wild with rage, he frothed and fumed

like a wild beast, as he rode like the whirlwind down the road toward his home.

For nearly two weeks after Harry's return to the Winterstine's, everything went on as usual, though many remarked a wonderful change in little Tom's appearance, though still as bashful as ever; and it had even been whispered that she had been seen, actually seen, alone and talking with the young man. Nearly two weeks, and still Silas Loffden was a constant visitor.

Prosperity attended them now, and they were happy, as happy goes, especially Tom. Nothing had happened to create any ill feeling between the two rivals; for rivals, indeed, Lovejoy and Loffden were considered to be by all—all save little Tom; she did not consider Silas Loffden as a rival to Harry Lovejoy. Many were the comments made as to how it would end, and there were those not wanting in readiness to prophesy that it would yet end in bloodshed; for that was the usual ending of a serious difficulty, whether it be of love or other matter, in that semi-civilized country.

But Loffden did not hope to win the affections of the fair little Tom. Ah, no; he had planned his final triumph after an altogether different plan.

Tom, as has already been said, was an artist of no mean ability, and her rare gems of art and paintings had proven such a source of income, that she had become to devote her entire time to this work. In this way she managed to provide for the family and had, so far, been able to keep the wolf from the door and had proven and verified her words, that she could provide for herself and father.

Her sketching tours had gradually extended farther and farther into the surrounding country. This fact was noted by Silas Loffden with especial interest and satisfaction—an interest so intense that he had, at one time, so nearly betrayed himself that he had aroused the suspicion of young Lovejoy.

"Ah," said Harry to himself, as he returned from his prospecting trip to the mountains where he went every few days, "I don't like that fellow to hang around quite so much. I meet him every time I go out and I have seen him watch Tom. By thunder now, I am going to settle this business; I don't like to hurry Tom, but she must answer, yes or no—I will know whether I have a right to protect her. Ah, I have a plan. I will persuade her to go up into the mountains with me to-morrow. She has been wanting to go up there." Thus musing, he rode on and soon turned into the little cottage home of Aunt Jane, where the Winterstine family were still staying.

"Tom," he said, reprovingly, as he met the shy little lass just returning from the pasture, "I told you I would be back in time to get the cows."

"But I thought that you wonld be tired, Harry," she answered sweetly.

"Tired! and why should I be more tired than you? I bet a new hat that you've been at work all day! Honor bright now, haven't you!" and he edged suspiciously near.

"No, I haven't been working very much to-day; you have frightened all the courage out of me—precious little though I ever had to lose. I met Loffden this morning

just as I was crossing the bridge at the river," she said, with a shy, rogueish glance into her lover's face. In an instant, as if a thunder cloud had swept over it, his face, always so kindly and pleasant, darkened, and a look of such intense hatred and passion flashed from his dark eyes, that it fairly took her breath away.

"Ah!" exclaimed Harry, "I suppose he offered to go along as a sort of body guard! Tom, I am going up into the mountains to-morrow; don't you want to go with me? You've been wanting to go. It's about fifteen miles up there where I am going. I have been prospecting up there. Will you go with me, Tom?"

"Oh, I would like to ever so much," she said gladly, "but I—I"

"What?" questioned Harry, passionately. "Are you afraid to go with me?"

"O Harry!" cried Tom, and her lustrous eyes filled with tears. O, I don't mean that! I never thought of such a thing! I wouldn't be afraid to go anywhere with you! But Aunty and Lucy—"

"Hang Aunty, and Lucy too!" interrupted Harry. "Between Aunty and Lucy, Loffden and me, you are kept in hot water all the time. I know that they will kick up a devil of a racket, but I don't care a—"

"Harry!"

"Well, it's the first time that I ever asked a favor of you, Tom, and if you refuse me this time, I will never have the courage to ask another I'm afraid. I want to talk with you, I—I want to—Iv'e got some business, or something. You know that we can't have a minute without some one's watching us. Will you go?" he pleaded

anxiously. "Be brave once; don't let them boss you all the time."

"Yes, I will go," she answered, resolutely; "but don't tell anybody; they needn't to know anything about it. You can saddle my pony for me in the morning, and then go on and wait for me at the bridge."

"Better tell your father, Tom, hadn't you?"

"I will if you think best, but I'd rather not. Lucy and Aunty have worried him so much they will tease the life out of him if I tell him, for they will ask him and he won't deny it if he knows," she answered.

"Just as you please, Tom; only I don't want to have him think that I am trying to mislead you."

"He won't think that, Harry; he ain't afraid to trust me with you," answered the girl, confidently.

"Tom—T–o–o–m!" came in the shrill piping tone of Aunt Jane's voice.

"O gracious!" cried Tom, as the voice came echoing down the lane, and at the same time she saw Aunt Jane standing on the back porch. "I forgot, Aunty told me to hurry, for she wants to go over to Gootsman's this evening. Open the gate, Harry, while I bring old Snow back."

"A kiss first!" cried Harry seizing her hand and holding her fast

"O Aunty is looking!" cried the girl, struggling to free herself.

"T–o–o–o–m–m!" shriller now, came the voice of Aunt Jane.

"Just one!" pleaded Harry.

"For shame, Harry!" cried Tom, striving to hide her blushing face with her hands.

"Just one!" pleaded Harry, removing her hands and holding them up in his strong hands above her head.

"T–o–o–o–o–m–m–m!" louder and still shriller this time, came the piping voice of Aunt Jane, who had been joined by Lucy and the two Gootsman girls just at this stage of the game.

"Kiss me quick!" cried Tom, struggling desperately "and let me go! O Jerusalem!" she exclaimed, for just then she spied the three girls, and they were looking. "O Lord!" worse yet, for there at the front gate and taking it all in, stood Silas Loffden. "I don't care!" she declared, as she darted away after old Snow.

"Hurry up, Tom," laughed Harry, a little vexed to be sure; "hurry, for they've seen it! O, they've got it laid up for us this time, sure!"

"I don't care!" cried Tom, angrily. "It's none of their buiness, and I'll tell 'em so; so there!"

"Phe-w-w!" whistled Harry. "But look out how you fool with a 'chicken-hearted girl!' Arn't angry at me are you, Tom?" pleaded Harry, humbly.

"No, no, but there's that miserable Loffden! O, how I hate him!" she cried.

"O, how sly we are!" twitted Lucy, as Tom dodged by her and the other girls and entered the house.

"A pretty pass things are coming to, I should say," stormed Aunt Jane.

"What's the matter? What's the matter now?" asked the father anxiously. "Tom, come here! What is it, child?" he asked, stroking her golden curls. "There, there, don't cry; don't be so chicken-hearted.

"Matter!" cried Aunt Jane, in utter disgust. "A pretty ado things are coming to when young girls get to allow the young men to hug and kiss 'em right afore the whole town!" and she bounced out of the room in high dudgeon.

"What does it mean, child?" asked the father, wiping away her tears.

"Harry kissed me and they saw us."

"Yes," said Harry entering the room, "I kissed her, but I didn't know that the whole town was a watching us."

"Well, well, be a little more careful after this. There child, don't cry about it any more. I know how it is, I was young once myself. Come now to supper; you've been working hard all day and I know you'r hungry."

"I won't go in there—I ain't hungry!" declared Tom.

"Neither am I," said Harry.

"Well, well," muttered the father, as he turned to the dining-room, "I know how it is—yes, yes!"

"It's all right, Tom," said Harry; "your father don't care; it don't make any difference about the rest. But what did you mean, Tom, by telling me that you hadn't been working much to-day?"

"Oh, I didn't want you to know—I didn't want you to be angry at Lucy."

"And you've been doing this all along! You'll work hard all day and tramp a mile or more after cows at night, when that la—"

"Harry!" she interrupted.

"She might do that much to help you, anyway!" declared Harry.

"She doesn't feel well," said Tom.

"She's tired—she's always tired; she was born tired, and she'll make the man tired that marries—"

"For shame, Harry, to talk so about a girl! I never heard you say such tuings about anybody before."

"It's an ungentlemanly thing to do I know, but I know who I am talking to—I know it won't go any further."

"You had better go and get your supper, Harry, you are hungry, I know—"

"And so are you!" interrupted Harry.

"I couldn't eat—I'm going to bed."

"Not without your supper, Tom."

"Yes," and hearing them leaving the table, she turned and hurried away.

"Good enough for her," ejaculated Aunt Jane. "She don't deserve any supper! If she was my child, I'd lock her up and keep her on bread and water for a week!"

"You were never young yourself, Jane, I presume?" queried the father.

"Oh, of course you'll take her part, you always do. Ah, Master Harry," she said, stately, "you'd better go to your supper."

"And why not send me to bed without my supper, too?" asked Harry.

"Come Aunty," cried Lucy from the garden, "we are waiting!"

"Good!" muttered Harry, as Aunt Jane bustled out of the house. "Good! I'll just help myself. Tom," he

called, knocking on her bedroom door, "get up, Tom; come, are you in bed?"

"I ain't hungry," came in a voice that told of tears.

"You shall eat just the same," declared Harry, bringing a plate heaped with a little of everything that he could find upon the table. "Here Tom, you shall not go without your supper! Eat that and then go to sleep, so you will be ready for to-morrow."

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AGAIN HIS EYES RESTED UPON THAT SWEET FACE. P. 67.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HERMIT.

Early the next morning, as was her custom, little Tom was up and busily engaged in the kitchen preparing breakfast. Lucy never made her appearance, unless upon some special occasion, until breakfast was ready and waiting. Aunt Jane was a little late this morning, or Tom was, perhaps, a little early, but Harry was up and, going down into the kitchen, he found Tom, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed and, with sleeves rolled up and hands in the dough, busily engaged in making a batch of bread for their breakfast.

"Heigho!" cried Harry, walking over to her side; and there was a suspicious twinkle in his eye as he said:

"We'll have some good biscuit for breakfast this morning."

And then, if Aunt Jane had been listening, (and who shall say that she was not?) she might have heard something that sounded suspiciously like a kiss, but, of course, it wasn't. Oh no! Although, a moment later, when Aunt Jane entered the kitchen, the very first thing that she noticed, was a guilty blush upon Tom's fair cheek and a little flour on Harry's mustache; but of course she didn't know the cause of all these suspicious evidences. Tom was a chicken-hearted girl and she would faint dead away if a young man was to kiss her."

"A-hem-m," from Aunt Jane, as Harry went out to do the chores. "A-hem—you are up early this morning, Tom."

"I went to bed early last night," suggested Tom, looking out of the window.

"A-h-em-m—" from Aunt Jane in a hesitating and doubtfnl manner, as if she wanted to say something but was in doubt just how to do it.

Tom put her bread in the oven and then going to the open window, leaned her head against the casement and looked away towards the mountains.

"Ah," she mused, "I wonder what he wants me to go up there with him for?"

And her weak little heart that would always fail her just when it ought not, fluttered and began to climb up as if struggling to escape.

"Oh, I wish I knew whether I ought to go—but I ain't afraid—I will go—I—I know he wouldn't take me there if it was wrong."

And a big, round tear chased another down across her plump, dimpled cheek and fell upon Aunt Jane's hand, who had just stepped to her side and rested her short. fat hand upon the window-sill.

"A-he-e-m." Aunt Jane's throat always did bother her some. "A-h-e-m—Tom, I am sorry for what I said last night," she said kindly; "forgive me Tom, for I was angry; but I was wrong—I see it now—there, there, child, don't cry, don't be so tender-hearted—what is Harry saddling his horse so early for, he isn't going to leave us because I made a fool of myself last night? Don't let him go, Tom!"

"No, no, he won't leave," said Tom, at a loss to understand her aunt's sudden change of heart.

"You ain't going anywhere with him to-day, are you, Tom?" asked Aunt Jane, for she suspected that something was up.

"Yes," replied Tom, slowly.

"Tom, what is he up to? what's he coaxing you away for? He ain't trying to coax you off to get married, is he? sputtered Aunt Jane, in dismay.

"Phe-w-w!" whistled Harry, coming in with an arm load of wood, and sniffing the air. "Phew—biscuits are burning!"

"O dear," cried Tom, "they are spoiled."

"Just right!" declared Harry, "I like 'em hard."

"They'll suit you, then, for they'r as hard as bricks," moaned Tom.

It's all my fault!" declared Aunt Jane, as they sat down to breakfast.

"Just right," declared Harry, trying to crack one by hitting it with the handle of his knife.

"Try this Harry," said Tom, innocently, handing him the hatchet.

"That's just the thing," he laughed, as he aimed a blow at the refractory biscuit. "Shall I crack one for you?" And he reached over toward Tom's plate.

"If you please," and she placed one up on edge. "Try the sharp edge of the ax," suggested Tom, as the first blow had failed to have the desired effect.

"Better try one, Lucy," ventured Harry. "Shall I crack it for you?"

"Thank you," replied Lucy, shortly, "I don't care for any."

"They look tough, but they taste good," declared Harry, cracking another.

But the breakfast was soon over and the horses, saddled and bridled, were impatiently awaiting their riders.

"Papa," said Tom, with downcast eyes, "may I go up into the mountains with Harry to-day?"

"Go where?" he asked. And Lucy raised her brows in amazement, and ejaculated—

"Well, I never!"

"Why it's twenty miles up there, and not a soul within ten miles!" exclaimed Aunt Jane, shocked at the idea.

"Please papa—I promised to go," pleaded the girl.

"The idea!" exclaimed the shocked and horrified Lucy. But Tom was always doing things that shocked her very delicate sense of propriety. "The idea! to go romping into the woods with that great, awkward boy!"

"And alone, too!" And Aunt Jane could, in her shocked state of mind, hardly believe her own ears.

"Let the child alone!" exclaimed the father impatiently. Yes, yes, child, go if you want to," he said, looking down into her blushing face. "Ah," he mused, as he walked down toward the gate where Harry was waiting with the horses, for Tom had told him that she was going to ask her father. "Ah, it must be, but I can hardly realize that my baby has grown up to be a woman. Ah, yes, times flies so swiftly—only a little while ago she was a laughing, prattling babe upon her mother's bosom, now, —yes, yes, Harry," he answered, to the lover's stammer-

ing and rather embarrassed and disjointed pleading, "yes, you may have her and may God bless you and her."

"Ah, Tom," he said, as the girl came running down the path to the gate, "be careful, child, and don't get hurt. The road is rough and the horse is skittish and high spirited."

"Don't worry, papa!" cried the happy girl, kissing her hand to him as she rode swiftly away.

On like a whirlwind dashed the fearless little rider; fearless, for hadn't she broke many a colt upon their little farm at Cliffside?"

On, on; they were fast nearing the mountains. Now, dashing down a deep, narrow defile through which the road wound its serpentine length, they came suddenly and unexpectedly upon Silas Loffden, mounted upon his coal-black horse and riding leisurely toward the mountains.

With a low bow and a pleasant "Good morning," he reined in his horse and allowed them to pass on.

"Darn that man!" muttered Harry, between his clenched teeth; and his brow contracted into a dark scowl."

"O Harry!" cried Tom, reproachfully, "please don't swear."

"I didn't mean to; but I tell you what, that man has dogged me just about long enough—confound him, I say, I don't like him!"

"Neither do I!" said Tom, quickly.

"I meet him every time I come up here. He's watching for something. Confound him, I say! I'd like to know what he's up to anyhow?"

"O! O!" cried Tom in delightful surprise, as they dashed out of the gloomy defile and entered a little park —a veritable paradise in that wilderness of gloomy hills and dark valleys. "O how delightful! and look! look! There's a little log house! Oh, isn't it lovely? And see, Harry, there's an old, white haired man. Do you know him, Harry?"

"No," replied Harry, "let's stop and see him." So they turned in and halted before the little cabin.

"Ah, good morning, good morning!" welcomed the old man, arising and coming out to meet them.

"Good morning, father!" greeted the girl, extending her hand and clasping his wrinkled hand in her soft, warm fingers while her dark, blue eyes sparkled and her beautiful face beamed with the glad, happy emotions that filled her heart.

"Quick! quick, Harry!" cried Tom in alarm, holding to the old man's hand to prevent him from falling. "Quick, catch him, Harry, he's sick!"

In an instant, Harry was beside him and supporting him in his strong arms assisted him to a large, arm-chair which was standing before the cabin door.

"O father!" cried the frightened girl, brushing his snow-white locks back from his aged brow, "can't I do something for you?"

But the old man did not answer. His head dropped upon his bosom and the tears trickled down his furrowed cheeks.

"Father, father!" pleaded the girl, anxiously. "Speak! O tell me what to do! O Harry," she implored, "can't you do something for him?"

"Hold him—don't let him fall, while I look in the house and see if I can find something."

Resting the old man's head upon her soft, warm bosom, she held him in her arms till Harry returned.

"Here's some camphor," he said, and began bathing the old man's face, and put a few drops in his mouth.

"Will he die?" asked the frightened girl, beginning to cry.

"No, no, Tom; he is beginning to revive," answered Harry, chafing his hands and temples briskly. "Let's get him into the house; there, I can carry him;" and raising him in his strong arms, he carried him into the house and laid him on the bed.

Slowly the old man recovered, and again his deep, gray eyes rested upon that fair, sweet face bending so anxiously, so pityingly over him.

"O God!" murmured the old man. "It is her face—her eyes. O Edith!" and he covered his eyes with his hands to shut out the vision of some past recollection. "Ah," he said, "I am better now. Leave me now, but stop when you come back, and see me."

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CHAPTER VIII.

PLOTTING.

"Ah, ha! my little beauty, and so you have come up to the mountains to day with Harry, have you? Ah, but I have waited long and patiently for this day. Ho, up, Coal, and away!" cried Loffden in a tone of triumph, spurring his coal-black horse into a swift gallop, as he turned and dashed away in the opposite direction from which he was traveling when Tom and Harry passed him.

Back for a few miles he rode, then turning toward the west he dashed on for half an hour when he came to a native village, and riding up to a hut at the edge of the village, he dismounted, and throwing his bridle rein to an old dried up specimen of a Zulu, he cried:

"Here, you yellow devil, hold my horse; and mind, none of your surly looks here or I'll cut your liver out! Give him water, but don't unsaddle. I will want him directly.

"Yah, yah, Boss Silas; we shall see, we shall see—"

"What's that, you hideous, one-eyed devil?" cried Loffden, furiously. "I'll gouge that other eye out of your hideous head, you snake-eating monkey!" And with this vindictive outburst, he turned and entered the hut.

"Yah, yah," muttered the old Zulu, "some day Boss Silas, some day!"

"Ho, Jante! drunk again? Darn your yellow-livered



"UP AND AWAY!" CRIED LOFFDEN, AS HE DASHED AWAY. P. 68.

carcass! Up and about, we've got work on hand to-day! Where's Fritz and Oden?" and he gave the Kafir a kick on the shin that sent him howling into the farther corner of the room.

"Ki, yi!" howled Jante. "Fritz an' Oden in tother room."

"Off, then, to the old hermit's. Young Lovejoy's there in the mountains with Tom. You can strike their trail there—follow them up and watch them; see where they go, where they leave their horses and then meet us on the road—we'll follow presently. Away, as if the devil was after you!"

"Without an instant's hesitation, (for it would seem their plans were already arranged and needed no explanation), Jante dasued away and in a moment was thundering away upon his mission, mounted upon a swift horse. As he left, two men entered the room.

"The game's on toast!" cried Loffden, exultantly. "The bird has ventured out at last. Saddle up the horses and let's away—I've sent Jante on to watch them," said Loffden.

Together the three men went out to the kraal, and and soon returned ready for the road.

"Here, you yellow devil, bring my horse!" commanded Loffden. "Mind, none of your muttering or I'll put a bullet through your dirty hide; do you hear?"

"Yah, yah, Boss Silas, I hear."

"See that you remember then!" he said, as he mounted and rode away with his two companions.

"Yah, yah!" muttered the dried up specimen, straightening up till he was as straight as an arrow.

"So Boss Loffden has another job on hand! Ah, we shall see! Boss Silas, we shall see!"

Riding swiftly for half to three-quarters of an hour, Loffden and his companions reached the road some two miles or more above the hermit's cabin; but, without checking their speed, for they knew full well that Tom and Harry would ascend the mountain, they dashed on for half a mile, when of a sudden, Jante appeared riding as if the furies were after him.

"What, ho there, Jante!" cried Loffden, "what's up? You look as if the devil had called on you for a roast and was chasing you out of the woods! Speak, you yellow-livered cuss!"

Breathless and panting with excitement, Jante told him how he had trailed the lovers. Their horses were tethered some two miles above and the lovers were a mile further on in the mountains.

"Quick, quick, Boss Silas!" he cried, hoarse with excitement. "Almighty! Boss Silas they've found a diamond—as big's the misses fist!"

"Out with you, you black devil! But where are their horses? Have you attended to them?" asked Loffden.

"Yah, Boss Silas, I led them about a mile and turned them loose."

"Good! let's off; lead on Jante, lead on! But that diamond Jante, are you sure of that?"

"Yah, Boss Silas, I saw it. It's as big as the misses fist!" he exclaimed.

"What do you think Fritz, can that black devil's story be true?"

"Such diamonds have been found," he replied.

"Ah, it may be the diamond that was lost—that 'Devil's Eye' that was discovered at Kimberly—the first diamond that was found there. It was lost up here in the mountains over twenty years ago," said Loffden.

"Yes, I have heard of that," said Oden. Jante wouldn't dare to tell such a lie; he must have seen it."

"Well, we shall see!" said Loffden.

"In the course of a quarter of an hour, they had arrived at the place where Tom and Harry had left their horses. Here they waited the return of the lovers.

Concealing themselves in the dense growth of bushes that grew close by the side of the little vale where the horses had been feeding, the four plotters waited and planned the murder of Harry and the capture of poor, little Tom.

"We must make a sure thing of this," said Loffden. "Lovejoy is a quick shot and he will fight. I will attend to him myself," and he examined his rifle. "Ah," he said, "you never failed me yet."

"You ain't going to shoot him are you?" asked Oden, with a shudder of horror.

"It's the only thing that we can do. Don't weaken now—remember the diamond; you and Fritz may have it if you will stand by me in this. Sh—I hear them coming," and again he examined his rifle, critically.

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CHAPTER IX.

A TRAGEDY.

"Yes," said Harry, as they started to go, "we will call in when we go back."

Ah, could they have foreseen what was in store for them, they would not have set out with such light and happy hearts. Could they have looked into the future and seen the dark deeds of bloodshed and crime, the days and nights of suffering, of misery, of woe, this tale of love and adventure had never been told.

But the future, unfortunately, or, perhaps, fortunately, (who can say?) was not revealed. So we find our young friends riding swiftly away from the little cabin toward the mountains.

"Harry," asked Tom, "what do you suppose was the matter with that old man?"

"It was heart-disease, I think," answered Harry. "But there was something about you that brought on the attack. It came near ending his life."

"But who can it be, Harry? I never saw him before," she said.

"I think that he knew your mother; I have heard something about it, I think. Don't you know anything about a love affair between your father and some one else over your mother?" asked Harry.

"No," she replied, "I never heard of it."

"Your father and this old hermit, so I have heard,



THE RAYS OF THE SUN FELL UPON IT. P. 75.

were rivals for your mother. They fought a duel, or were 'going to fight, when your mother interfered and stopped them. She married your father, of course, and they have been sworn enemies ever since. This old man could never get over his disappointment. He is a little like me, Tom; I don't believe that I could ever love again, if the girl I love should refuse me. It's the nature of some men to love with their whole heart; and, if they fail to win their love, they can never love again.

"What do you see up there, Tom?" he asked, for she was looking away.

"Oh, nothing," she answered, evasively.

"Ah, here we are. We'll leave our horses here," he said, dismounting and tethering them where the grass grew rank and deep. "There, now we will go up the mountain. Let's follow up this dry creek. I was up here the other day. Right here, I was prospecting, when I looked up and saw Loffden standing up there in the road watching me for some purpose. Curse him, I'd like to send a bullet through him!"

"O Harry!" pleaded Tom, "don't talk so; don't let him worry you on my account!"

"It's not that, Tom; I know that you don't like him, it's not that; but I know something else about him."

And he told her of Gretchen's ruined life and his suspicion of that awful tragedy at the bridge.

"I can't prove it Tom, but I know—I saw her there at one moment and the next she was gone. She has never been seen nor heard of since. Tom, there was no place where she could have gone to so quickly save down into the river. That's where she went. And, Tom, he sent her there, too!"

"O Harry," murmured Tom, "you know I told you that I saw Gretchen that same evening and she told me about that. O Harry! I almost owe my life to her. Oh, I would a thousand times rather die than to be his wife!"

"Tom," said Harry, stepping before her and seizing her hands, "Tom, do you know what I have brought you here for?" And his voice was low and passionate. "Tom, I want you to be my wife—I love you—I have loved you ever since we first met that day by the spring, when that old villain of an ostrich chased you down. Will you marry me, Tom?"

Her great blue eyes drooped and a soft, rosy blush stole over her fair cheek, as she answered in a voice so low and sweet—

"Yes."

There are some things that it is not well to pry into too closely and, perhaps, the blissful half hour which followed, is one of them.

A half hour later we find the lovers walking slowly along the dry, sandy bed of a little brook. They had reached a place where the brook was lined with a dense growth of bushes and had been hunting for the many curious little pebbles which were to be found there. Tom was walking a little in advance, when a little cry of delight escaped her lips, as she stooped and picked up a beautiful pebble, covered with a coat of delicate tinted gold and green.

"O look, look, Harry!" she cried. "Isn't it a beauty? Won't it show off beautifully in my collection?

For a moment Harry stood staring at the stone in blank amazement. His lips moved, but uttered no

sound, and the hand that he held out to receive it, shook perceptibly as she dropped the stone into it.

"O Harry!" cried Tom, and her lips quivered and her eyes filled with tears as she saw the pale face and uncontrollable agitation of her companion, as he stared at the innocent looking pebble. "O Harry! what's the matter? what is it?"

"Tom," said Harry, controlling his emotion with an effort. "O Tom, you can be a rich lady now and without marrying Silas Loffden, too! See, Tom!" he said, scraping the mossy covering from the pebble and holding it up so that the rays of the sun fell upon it; "see, it's a diamond and a valuable one too! It is more valuable than all the boasted wealth of Silas Loffden."

As the rays of the sun flashed back with that unmistakable splendor and brilliancy that revealed the true nature of the stone, a subdued exclamation of surprise issued from the bushes almost directly above their heads.

Quick as lightning Harry faced in the direction from whence the sound had come, rifle in hand.

A moment later the clatter of horses feet was heard as some one rode rapidly away.

"Quick Tom." cried Harry, "we must get out of here; that fellow saw what you found and he has gone for help. He will return with friends and they will rob us —yes, worse, they will murder us!"

"O Harry! do you think that he saw it? Do you think he knew what it was?" asked the frightened girl.

"Yes, yes; hurry, Tom, hurry! Oh, if we can only get to our horses!"

And he dragged the girl away, regardless of the limbs and thorns that caught and tore her clothes into shreds.

At last, breathless and so exhausted that poor Tom could hardly stand, they arrived at the place where they had left their horses, only to find them gone.

"O God!" cried little Tom, "what shall we do?"

"Do!' exclaimed Harry, "by gosh, I believe that it is a plot planned by that villain Loffden; he's had some one watching us! If 'tis him, they are watching for us

The sharp, whip-like crack of a rifle rang out upon the still air of the mountain dell and, without a murmur, Harry Lovejay staggered forward and fell at the feet of little Tom.

With one wild, dispairing cry, Tom fell upon her knees and clasped her arms about her unconscious lover's neck and cried—

"O my God! O my God! He is dead!"

Merciful, indeed, was that veil of unconsciousness which spared her the agony of the cruel parting from the man whom she loved so dearly; for unconsciousness came to her relief.

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"So I have got you at last!" P. 77.

CHAPTER X.

THE STAR OF KIMBERLY.

"Ah, Tom, my darling little Tom," cried Loffden in a tone of mocking triumph; "so I have got you at last! Ha, ha! yes, the day will soon come when you, my little beauty—you, the prettiest girl in all the Cape Countries—the Star of Kimberly—will not say me nay. Ah, my little beauty!" he said, as he raised the unconscious girl in his strong arms and bore her away. Somehow, the sight of that pale face, upon which was written such an unutterable expression of agony, as she lay upon the bosom of her fallen lover, sent a chill of horror and dread to his guilty heart.

The body of the murdered lover was searched and the diamond was found. Larger even, and more valuable than Jante had pictured it.

"Ah," said Loffden, "let me see, let me see! Yes, it must be named; ah, I have it! Yes, it shall be called, 'The Star of Kimberly'. It is the same diamond that was discovered by old Lovell, the hermit that lives down the road a few miles, some twenty years ago—the first diamond found where the diamond fields of Kimberly are now. Yes, it shall be called 'The Star of Kimberly', declared Loffden. "But let go us back to the village, for I must return to Perth to-night. I must get back before dark, so as to mislead the people and throw suspicion in some other direction. I will be there by

sunset, and back here again by ten o'clock to-morrow. So saying, they set out on their return to the Kafir village.

Poor, little Tom! kind providence had drawn the veil of unconsciousness about her and she was spared the agony of parting from her lover, who lay stretched in death, for, he certainly must be dead, they thought. Silas Loffden never missed a shot, nor had he missed this time. At only twenty paces he had taken a steady and deliberate aim at the very centre of the broad, high forehead of Harry Lovejoy; and he had seen the red life-blood as it gushed from an ugly wound in the victim's temple.

Riding on till they reached the Kafir village, the four assassins rode directly to the hut from whence they had set out some five or six hours before. Here they stopped and dismounting, carried the still unconscious girl into the hut.

"Here old woman," cried the triumphant villain, here's the missie! Look after her well till I return, and if you keep her safe, I will make you rich for a year; but if anything happens to her while I am gone, I will put a bullet through your ugly head. Ho Jante, mark you, your life as well as your old woman's, depends on your keeping this girl safe! I'll pay you well, or I'll kill you dead, as the case merits.

Carrying the girl into an inner room, he lay her upon a bed and again cautioning and threatening the old woman and Jante, he turned to his two accomplices in crime—two men that had been with him for twenty years and had done many a dark and bloody deed for

his hire, two men that were as completely within his power as deeds of blood and power of gold, could place them; so completely in his power, that he feared not to trust them with a knowledge of his darkest crimes—turning to these two men, he said—

"Boys, you know how important is this work to me. So far everything is all right. Harry Lovejoy was the only man on earth that I had cause to fear; now, that he is out of the way, the titles to my fortune are secure. The old hermit, Lovell, is the only man that could rob me of my lands, but he will never do it. There are two reasons why—he knows I will kill him if he betrays me, for one reason, and the other reason is, that the old deeds which he has, would give the lands to Tom Winterstine. Her mother was the sole heir to all of this property, which. at her death, would go to her children—Tom is the one and only heiress. Old Lovell would rather see the devil have the lands than the Winterstines. Harry Lovejoy, though, would have bridged the chasm between these two old rivals. But I havn't time now to tell you how and why. You know as well as I what the trouble was between old Lovell and Winterstine, but the part that Harry would have played and the reasons for it, are altogether a different story. There's but one person living *now*, beside myself, that knows anything about it and that is old Zulu. I have nothing to fear from him now that Harry is out of the way. He knows that I would kill him if he should tell it, and he knows that old Lovell would kill him if he knew that old Zulu had done the deed. So you see the importance of the work we have done. It is important

to me and equally as important to you, too—important to me, because I get rid of the only man on earth that I fear, and, at the same time, gain possession of the one lawful heir to these lands; important to you, because you have gained possession of a diamond that is worth a fortune to you. Now, there's no use for me to caution you; guard the girl till I return, and you shall have the diamond for your reward. I will bring a magistrate with me, and little Tom, 'The Star of Kimberly', shall be my wife to-morrow night. Then will I hold all the trumps."

So saying he turned from the hut and was soon riding away toward Perth.

"Oden," said Fritz, Boss Silas is a deep villain. I've told you all along that when he is done with us, he will put us out of the way, and he'll do it. He'll put us out of the way for fear that we'll squeal on him. I tell you, he'd no more hesitate to take our lives if he was to gain by it, than he did to shoot that young fellow. It's only a question of a little time, and that time ain't far off either. He's just about done with us, and I tell why. He's going to marry that girl; she's the heir to all this property; no one beside us knows anything about this affair; if we were out of the way, nothing could be proven against him. The girl don't know that he had anything to do with the killing of Harry—no one but us and Jante knows anything about it. But that's not all; by putting us out of the way, he will not only destroy all evidence against him, but he will double his fortune. I tell you, Oden, if this hadn't been his plan, he never would have given up this diamond! No, by

thunder, Silas Loffden, the man who has murdered a half dozen human beings to forever silence their testimony against his illegal possession and title to a valuable estate, would not hesitate to silence us too, when, by doing so, he would not only gain a more valuable piece of property, but would accomplish the very object that he has been working for—to get rid of the last witness against him—that is you and I. I've been studying over this matter for a long time and this is my plan—I don't propose to let him put me out of the way. We've got all out of this that we want, if we will only just take it; and, by thunder, I am going to do it! We've got the diamond and we've got the girl—they are worth a million dollars apiece—we've got just as much right to them as Silas Loffden has. All we've got to do, is to skip out."

"But what can we do with the girl?" asked Oden doubtfully.

"If I were as young as you are, I would find a use for her," replied the older villain. "If you don't want her, I will take her myself. I simply offered her to you because you are the youngest, but I'll take her.'

"No, you don't, I'll take her; but how are we to get her away?" said Oden.

"Carry her away, of course! Jante is dead drunk by this time; "I'll fix the old woman so she won't make any racket, while you go and bring up the horses. The girl can ride on a man's saddle all right. "We'll make her believe that we are friends and I'll guaratee, she'll make us no trouble."

"All right, I fetch the horses. You attend to the old

woman; hurry up, for the sooner we are off the better for us," he said; and went out to fetch the horses.

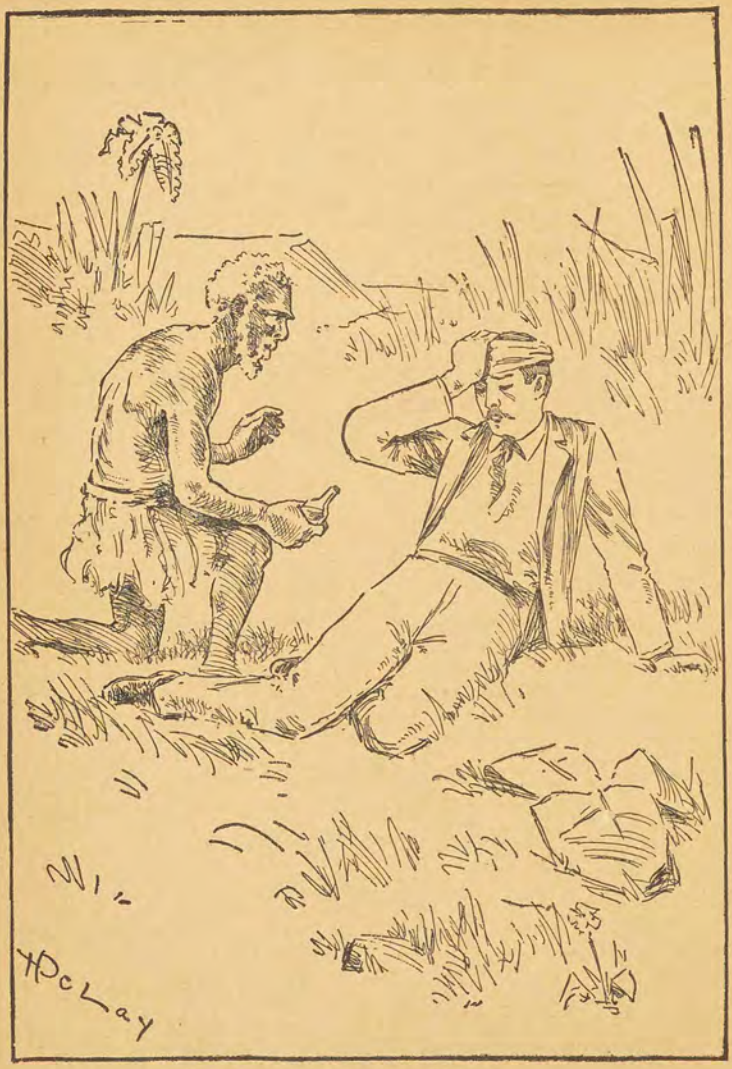
As his brother went out, Fritz went to the door of the room, in which the girl was confined and called to the old woman. As she came to the door, Fritz seized her by the throat to prevent an outcry, then, in a few moments, he had her securely bound and gagged, and then, dragging her back into the room, he assured the frightened girl, who by this time had recovered from her unconsciousness, that he was a friend, come to rescue her. This, of course, was easy enough, for the girl, it will be remembered, knew nothing about them, as she had not seen them.

"Quick, quick!" urged the villain, "the horses are ready, come!"

And he led the poor child, whose heart bounded with hope and gratitude, still further away from home and friends.

"Ah," he said, as he assisted her into the saddle, "no one sees us, Jante is drunk; the coast is clear." And they dashed away.

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"O MY HEAD!" MOANED HARRY. P. 83.

CHAPTER XI.

PURSUIT.

Scarcely had Silas Loffden and his three hired assasins turned from the scene of that bloody tragedy in the quiet, little mountain dell, when a long, shriveled up old man, which was none other than the muttering old Zulu, appeared upon the scene.

Gliding noiselessly from the bushes, he went quickly over to the prostrate form of the stricken man and bent down till his ear touched the breast of the fallen lover.

For a moment he stood thus, and then drawing a flask from some mysterious portion of his scanty raiment, he pressed it to the wounded man's lips. In an incredibly short space of time he had bandaged the ugly looking wound across the young man's temple; and then, by the aid of cold water and the liquor which he carried in his flask, soon restored the man to consciousness.

"Ah," muttered the old man, "the Boss made a mistake this time; but it's the first. Ah, yah, Boss Silas does not often make a mistake. Yah, yah, Boss Silas; but we shall see, we shall see!"

"O my head!" moaned Harry, putting his hands to his head. "Oh, I remember now," he said, raising to a sitting posure and looking about him, "yes, yes, I saw him just as he shot, but couldn't dodge quick enough. It was Silas Loffden that shot me."

"Yah, yah," muttered the old Zulu; "that accounts

for it. Boss Silas never made a mistake of this kind before."

"Ah, old man, I believe I have seen you before, but I don't remember where. Were you here when they shot me?" asked Harry. "Do you know where they have gone? where they've taken the missie?"

"Yah," replied the old man, "I was not far away. They'll takes the missie to the Kafir village where Jante and the old woman lives. Boss Loffden will return to Perth. The missie will be safe till morning, when Boss Silas will return to take her away. Ah, yah, Boss Silas, we shall see, we shall see!"

"Who was it with Loffden?" asked Harry.

"Fritz and Oden Goff," replied the old man. "Fritz and Oden Goff! Ah, yah, they are always with him when he has any evil deed on hand. Yah, yah, we shall see, Boss Silas, we shall see!"

"And they will return to the Kafir village? Then I must go there! Can you tell me where I can find them? where they will take the missie?"

"Yah, yah, Boas Harry, I can tell, but you must wait till night; they would shoot you if you were to go there now. But come, I will show you. Follow me. Ah, yah, we shall see, Boss Silas, we shall see," muttered the old Zulu as he led the way.

For several miles Harry followed the old man who, in spite of his old age and bent form, made such remarkable speed as to tax Harry's powers of locomotion to their utmost to keep up with him, when they arrived at the home of the old hermit where Tom and Harry had stopped but a few hours before.

With tears the old man listened to the story which Harry told. When he had finished, the hermit, after a moment of silence, said:

"Ah, my young friend, so you and Silas Loffden have met at last! Well, I need not tell you that he's a dangerous foe. I have known him all his life. I knew his father before him. Old Silas Loffden, James Winterstine and I came to this country together twenty-five years ago. Yes, yes, I knew him; he will not hesitate, as you have already seen, to take human life if it stands in his way. But some day he will stop. By right, he owns not a shilling of the immense property he possesses. The old deeds were lost and the new deeds which placed this property in Loffden's possession, were forged. The original deeds are still in existence, and some day they will be brought up to testify against him. I have labored long and persistently and have, at last, found the old deeds. Yes, I have all the evidence now, and I am waiting to arraign him before the bar of justice. The country is well settled now, and we have courts of justice now—ah, yes, the day of retribution is near at hand.

"Yah, yah," chimed in the old Zulu, "we shall see, Boss Silas, we shall see!"

"Yes," continued the old man, meditatively, "old Zulu has something against him. He killed the old Zulu's wife and two children for fear they would, some day, testify against him."

"We shall see, Boss Silas, we shall see!" reiterated the old Zulu; and his yellow skin turned livid with rage and his little black eye glittered vindictively.

But at last Harry's impatience would not allow him to

tarry any longer and finally, he prevailed upon the old Zulu to go with him to the Kafir village.

It was well after dark when they arrived at the hut where Jante lived, only to find to his horror and dismay, that they had gone—gone, no one knew where. The two villains who had aided Loffden had borne her away to the north. Nothing more was kuown; neither did any one know where Jante was.

"Yah, yah, Jante has gone to warn his master," muttered the old Zulu.

For two days Harry scoured the country in every direction; and, at last, struck the trail of the missing girl and her abductors.

Some fifty miles to the northeast, they had passed a native village on their way to the sea-coast. The trail became plainer now, and the pursuing lover found no difficulty in following. For six days he had, almost without stopping, pursued them. Slowly, but surely he was gaining upon them.

Dark and threatening, the evening of the sixth day had gathered about him. Wearied and almost overcome by fatigue and hunger, Harry lay down by the roadside to rest, and in a few minutes was asleep.

How long he had slept, he knew not, when he was awakened by a wild, frightened cry that rang out loud and clear above the roar of the tempest which had just swooped down upon him from the high and rugged mountains to the north. Again came that cry—it was nearer now.

Springing quickly to his feet, and with drawn revolver, he bounded forward. Struggling and battling with the tempest, he pressed on. O how his heart beat

against its prison walls at the thought that, perhaps, that cry was uttered by little Tom. A cry, perhaps, for help, uttered in some awful fear.

On, on, he struggled, fiercely, furiously; peering intently into the darkness and listening for some sound to guide him. Presently, down upon the wings of the tempest, was borne to his listening ears, the clatter of horses hoofs rapidly approaching him. In a moment more, the indistinct outlines of two horsemen were seen.

On they dashed. They were within five paces now.

"Halt!" the command rang out loud and clear above the roar of the tempest. For one brief instant, the horsemen paused, then uttering a fearful oath, the leader, mounted upon a powerful coal-black horse, bounded forward; discharging his revolver at the dark form which had, so unexpectedly, barred the way.

As quick as had been the horseman's act, the revolver of Harry Lovejoy blazed forth in answer. With one mighty spring, the coal-black horse bounded into the air and fell dead almost at his slayer's feet. Again and again, rang out that note of death, as the other horseman, with some object bound upon the horse in front of him, wheeled his horse and made a desperate effort to escape the avenger's hand. But his flight was short, for in a moment, the horse staggered and fell.

In an instant, the slayer sprang forward, and before the horseman could disengage himself from the fallen animal, for he had fallen upon the rider's leg and held him fast, young Harry Lovejoy was upon him.

One swift and terrible blow from the heavy revolver,

dealt by the strong arm of Harry Lovejoy, laid the wretch quivering at his feet.

"O Tom, Tom!" cried Harry, as he looked down into the wild, frightened eyes of little Tom, as she lay bound upon the horse and partly beneath him. "O Tom, darling, are you hurt? Speak Tom!" he cried, as he severed the bands which held her and dragged her under the horse.

"O Harry!" was the glad cry, as she felt herself clasped, once again, in the strong arms of her lover.

"Are you hurt, Tom?" he cried, anxiously.

"No, no," she replied, "not much, Harry; but where is he—where is Loffden?"

"God!" cried Harry, in his excitement, forgetting his promise to little Tom to renounce profanity; for he had not thought of him before, so overjoyed was he at the knowledge that Tom was safe and unhurt.

"Come, let's see!" and he led the way back where the coal-black horse lay. As he drew near, a low moan told them of his presence and that he lived.

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ON SHE TRUDGED, LEADING HIM. P. 93.

CHAPTER XII.

TOM INTERCEDES FOR HER ENEMY

A NIGHT OF HORROR.

"Miserable wretch!" cried Harry, thrusting the cold muzzle of a revolver against the temple of the cowering villain who, stunned by his fall, was just recovering consciousness.

"Wretch, die like the dog that you are!"

"No, no!" cried Tom, seizing the hand that held the pistol. "Don't shoot him, please don't!"

"Curse him anyway!" cried the infuriated lover. "I ought to kill him! Oh, I will murder him! I will, I will! Curse him, I say!"

"O Harry," pleaded the girl, "please don't, I can't bear to see you kill him. O, I can't, I can't!"

"Where's the diamond, you black-hearted renegade?" demanded Harry, giving him a kick in the ribs that made him writhe in pain. "Speak, or by —— I'll put a bullet through your villainous heart!" And he gave him another kick in a very tender place.

"O Harry!" cried the tender-hearted girl, pleadingly. "Don't, don't!"

"Darn him!" hissed the half crazed and infuriated Harry. "He shall give it up to you, or by thunder I'll kick the life out of him!" And he administered another kick, which was followed by a cry of pain. "Out with it,

darn you!" And he drew back his foot for another kick.

"Harry!" with quivering lips, while the tears filled her eyes. "O don't be so cruel, Harry!" And she stepped between the two men.

"Tom!" cried Harry, in such a fierce, passionate tone, for all the savage passion of his nature was so thoroughly aroused, that the poor, tender-hearted girl shrunk back in alarm before that fierce, awful fire that blazed from the infuriated man's eyes. "Tom, I swear by the Almighty, if he don't give it up with his own hand, I will kick him as long as a breath of life remains in his murderous carcass!" And he aimed another kick that caught him fairly in the middle.

"Darn you!" hissed the half crazed Harry, removing the hanndkerchief from his head and showing him the horrible wound across his temple where Loffden's bullet had struck him. "Darn you, I say!" And again he caught him full under the short ribs.

"O Harry, my darling Harry!" sobbed the poor girl, and her bare, white arms stole around his neck; and drawing his wounded head down, she pressed her quivering lips again and again to his hot, fevered cheek. "O don't kick him again, Harry, darling! Shoot him, Harry, if you will, but don't—O don't kill him so."

"Tom," said Harry, striving to control his passion, "see there," and he placed his finger upon that horrible gash which Loffden's bullet had given him and which had come so near ending his life; which, uncared for as it had been, presented a most shocking appearance, and still exposing the bare skull just above the right temple. "See, Tom; it was Silas Loffden gave me that. For-

give me, Tom, if I am cruel, for I can't help it. O my head!" he moaned. "O God! I could kill him, I will—I —" And again he raved like a maniac.

Poor Tom, in tears, plead with her lover to be calm, for she saw, with an awful fear at her heart, that his suffering was robbing him of reason.

"O Harry," she cried, "kill him, kill him! Oh, I could kill him; I will kill him!" cried the girl; for the sight of her wounded lover's suffering, and the thought that it was fast driving him mad, that he might yet die from it's effects, drove her mad, transformed the gentle, tender-hearted girl into a veritable little fury. "O I will!" she fairly screamed," and before Harry could realize the sudden and unexpected change in the meek, gentle little Tom, she seized the heavy rifle which lay at Loffden's side and, thrusting it almost against the horrified wretch's heart, fired. But Harry was too quick for her; for, springing forward, he knocked the rifle aside and saved his enemy's life.

"Tom, Tom!" cried Harry, seizing the little fury in his strong arms and holding her fast. "Tom, Tom; for heaven's sake child, you are crazy!"

"Hold her, hold her!" cried Loffden, wildly; as the girl, struggling like a veritable little fury to free herself from her lover's arms, cried breathlessly:

"Let me go! Let me go! I'll kill him, I'll kill him!" And she struggled furiously again.

"Tom, Tom!" coaxed Harry. But it was no use; the meek, harmless, gentle little Tom, so tender-hearted that even one little unkind word or act would bring tears to her loving eyes, was bent upon murder; and it re-

quired all the strength of the great, noble-hearted boy to restrain her her.

"Tom," he said, calmly now, for the girl's terrible passion had aroused his anxiety and cooled his anger by drawing his attention from Loffden to her, "Tom, Tom, you must not do so! I won't let you kill him!"

"I will, I will!" she panted, still struggling. "Let me go! Let me go!"

"Almighty!" cried Harry, tightening his arms about her till he fairly squeezed the breath out of the poor child, "Almighty, now; but I've a notion to let her kill you. Darn you, if I thought you had misused the girl, by act or even by insulting words, I would hold you while she tears your treacherous heart out!"

"I have not misused her, I have not offered her insult!" cried Loffden, imploringly. "Ask her if I have. Here, Tom, here's your diamond—I didn't know it was yours. Take it, Tom, and let me go and I will never bother you again. I didn't mean you any harm, Tom, I—"

"You lie, you hell-hound!" cried Harry. "You sought this little girl's ruin and would have accomplished it, too, as you did poor Gretchen's. Had that shot you gave me proved fatal—don't you deny it, don't you dare to offer any excuse—I know the story of Gretchen. I saw you raise your hand to strike her that night at the bridge, and I know her fate; and I know, could you have carried out your hellish design, that a worse fate, if possible, would have been this little girl's lot! O darn you!" he cried, "darn you!" and again, the infuriated lover fetched the cowering wretch such a kick under the short ribs of his left side, that he fell back with a groan and lay quite still.

"O Tom, I have killed him!" groaned Harry. "God forgive me if I have done wrong."

Tom was quiet now; and kneeling beside the prostrate form, and with hands clasped upon her throbbing bosom, she said in low, soft accents:

"You are not to blame, Harry; he has sought your life—he has sought my ruin," and her soft tones sunk to a low whisper; "and Harry, God is good, He will forgive us, for He knows that this night I would have been lost; and then—O Harry! God is good, He will forgive us, for he knows. But I won't tell you now, sometime I will—O thank God, you were not too late."

"Then he died with a lie on his lips, for he said that he offered you no insult," said Harry, wildly.

"God knows and He will forgive us, for He heard him; but you saved me Harry—sometime, I will tell you," mused the girl.

"O my head!' muttered the wounded man. "Ha, ha, I killed him, I killed him! Come, come, Tom, let's go home; they will miss us and Aunt Jane will scold—come, come, let's go! Where are we, Tom? Ah, I see —I know—O my head! Ha, ha," he laughed, wildly, and started off.

Poor Tom. With a feeling of awful fear at her heart, she realized that the terrible suffering of her wounded lover was fast robbing him of reason.

"What can I do, O what can I do?" she wailed, taking his hand in her's and leading him away. "O God," she prayed, "help me, guide me, that I may lead him away from his enemies!"

On, on, she trudged, leading him as though he was a child. Her only hope being to lead him away from his

enemies, to hide him till he should be sufficiently recovered to realize his condition, his danger; for she knew Jante was not dead. Terrible as the blow dealt him had been, she knew it was not sufficient to kill the hard headed negro. And then, perhaps, Loffden would not die; for he was not quite dead, she well knew, when they left him.

On, on they fled, till they reached the heavy timber. Here, sheltered from the beating storm, they sat down beneath the spreading branches of a great tree to rest.

"O my head, O my head!" moaned Harry, rocking himself to and fro in his agony.

"Harry, dear," pleaded poor Tom, "let me dress your wound, let me bathe your head with cold water, it will make you feel better."

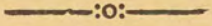
"Ah, is it you, Tom?" and he pressed his hands to his aching head. "O this terrible dream! O Tom, my darling, my poor little Tom; they have stolen her away! O God!" he moaned, weeping bitterly.

Poor Tom, with aching heart, sat throughout all that long and awful night with her lover's head pillowed upon her lap, bathing his wound with the cool water which came rushing in torrents around them. O how thankful she was for that blinding, driving tempest that poured down upon them, drenching them to the skin and cooling that hot, fevered face and, at last, quenching that fever fire that raged within him.

Wild at times, and at times quite rational, though insensible to his surroundings, he finally settled down into a quiet and peaceful sleep.

Crouching down beside her wounded lover, the drenched and shivering little creature prayed God to spare his life—to give him back to her.

"O give him back to me!" she moaned, and bowing her head upon his bosom, she cried herself to sleep.



CHAPTER XIII.

FLIGHT.

The storm had passed and the warm sun shining down through the branches overhead kissed the pale cheek of little Tom, while the soft, perfumed breeze toyed with her golden curls and drank up the moisture from her drenched garments. Higher and higher crept the king of day, still the fugitives slept on. A parrot perched upon a limb overhead, tilted his head to one side and surveyed the sleeping pair with a curious, critical gaze. At last, seemingly satisfied as to the strange creatures, he ruffled up his feathers and screamed lustily in his harsh, shrill voice.

"O what a dream!" murmured Harry, opening his eyes and looking wildly about him. "O heavens!" he cried, as his gaze fell upon the golden tresses and sweet, pale face of little Tom, nestling so trustingly, so peacefully upon his shoulder. One arm had, unconsciously, stolen around his neck, while a sweet, peaceful smile played about her pale lips.

"Ah," mused Harry, "then it was not all a dream. Yes, I remember now; but where are we? Where are they? Poor, little Tom," he murmured, drawing her head closer, till his lips touched her arm. That warm, passionate kiss seemed to awaken in the bosom of the little sleeper, the memory of some sweet and happy dream; for a warm blush suffused her pale cheek and a glad, peaceful smile played about her lips.



"O HARRY, YOU FEEL BETTER NOW." P. 97.

For a long time he lay quiet, for fear of moving, lest he should awaken the poor girl from her happy dream. Holding her close to his heart, wifh her soft, warm cheek resting so peacefully against his own, he passed, so it seemed to him, the happiest half hour of his life.

"O what a happy dream!" he murmured, for the fever had left him and he felt quite easy. "O what a happy dream!" and looking down into the great, wondering blue eyes of little Tom who, wide awake now, met his ardent, admiring gaze with that innocent, trusting look which spoke so plainly of the love and confidence which she placed in him.

"O Harry!" cried the girl joyously, as she arose and looked about them. "O Harry, you feel better now. Ah, you look so much better; that wild look has all left your eyes. O thank God!" she murmured. "He heard my prayer—He gave you back to me."

"Ah, I see, I see," said Harry. "I was out of my head. I was trying to study out where we are and how we came here, but I couldn't remember. The last I can remember, I was holding you to keep you from killing Loffden. You wanted to kill him, and it was about all I could do to hold you. You don't look as though you would hurt anything, but good Lord! I hope you will never get angry at me, if you are always that way when you are mad."

"Oh, I wanted to kill him, when I remembered how cruel he had been and how he had shot you; and I was so afraid that it would make you sick and you would die. O Harry, it made me mad—I guess I was mad—I never felt so before, and O, I hope I will never feel so again. I wanted to kill him—I couldn't help it."

"Yes, I remember it all now," said Harry. "I remember I was holding you when Loffden said something that made me mad. I can remember I kicked him and I thought he was dead; but I don't believe that I killed him. He said something about you, I don't remember what—perhaps I didn't understand him—but I thought perhaps that he had injured you. Oh, if I thought he had, I would go back and hunt him down and kill him!"

"No, no, Harry, you saved me. Thank God, you were not too late. But don't let's talk about that, Harry, it makes you mad—it will make your head hurt. Come, let's go and see if we can't find something to eat. I am almost starved."

Fortunately, game was plenty and Harry, being a good shot, soon bagged a brace of birds that made them a bountiful repast, such as it was; and good, indeed, did it taste to the half starved fugitives.

"Nothing but a little salt could make it better," declared Tom.

"It would improve the flavor a little," agreed Harry. "But I am satisfied and now, the next thing is, what are we going to do?"

"We must try to get back home just as soon as we can. Oh, poor papa will worry himself to death. Come, Harry, do you feel strong enough to walk? Take my arm—don't you remember when I helped you home once before?"

"Remember! Ah, yes, I will always remember that, Tom," replied Harry; and taking her arm in his, they set out again on their flight.

For three days they toiled on through the forests, and had almost persuaded themselves that they were out of

danger when, late in the evening, and just as they had finished their supper of fruit and roasted venison, they discovered Loffden with a score of blacks following their trail. Their pursuers had not seen them yet, but to slip away unseen by the keen eyed Kafirs, was altogether out of the range of possibilities. To run or to fight was the only thing left them to do. But to fight against such odds was, at best, but a hope of making them pay dearly perhaps for their victory; for the Kafirs were all well armed and are, universally, expert with the rifle.

"Tom," said Harry, taking a small revolver from his pocket, "take that and conceal it inside of your clothes where it will be safe and, if worse comes to worse, use it. Don't hesitate, but if you have to, do it quick—you understand—you know how to use it; you are a good shot and for God sakes, Tom, if you use it, don't miss. Promise me, Tom, that you will do it."

"I promise Harry," she answered, taking the pistol and concealing it within the bosom of her dress.

"Come," said Harry, taking her and and setting out on a run.

In a moment the keen eyed Kafirs saw them and, with shouts of triumph, bounded away in pursuit. The Kafirs, so swift on foot, soon pressed them so hard that they were obliged to come to a stand. Choosing as favorable a position as possible among some large rocks and trees, they awaited the onset.

Loffden, who had not yet recovered from the severe punishment that he had received from the hand, or rather the foot of the infuriated Harry that awful night, was not able to keep up with the swift footed Kafirs, as he could not ride his horse out of a walk on account of

an injury which that last, terrible kick had done him; so when the Kafirs saw that the fugitives had, at last, come to a stand, they awaited the arrival of Loffden.

Darkness was fast gathering around them and, as Harry well knew, it was for this that they were waiting. Under cover of the darkness the wily Kafirs would crawl upon them and then, all together, would make a rush and over-power their powerful and dangerous opponent before he could have time to use the deadly and dreaded weapons which he carried.

"They mean to surprise us," Tom, said Harry, "but they are off; they'll find that we are here when they come. I noticed that Loffden acted as though he didn't feel just right. I guess I hurt him pretty bad. I'd like to get a shot at him, but he'll keep out of the way."

"O Harry," whispered poor little Tom, eagerly, breathlessly, her heart fluttering with the awful fear, as she thought, that perhaps her lover would be killed. "O Harry, I'm so afraid! Oh, what can we do against so many? Tell me, Harry, what to do; tell me what you will do, so I will know, for if they kill you, I will kill myself. I can't live without you. Tell me, Harry, just what to do."

"Don't kill yourself, Tom, unless you are compelled to do it. Better die, Tom, than to let Loffden have you; but you can kill him. But don't get discouraged, darling, there's hope yet—lot's of it. It looks bad to you—'tis bad, but not hopeless. No, Tom, I ain't ready to die—I ain't going to die for a good many years yet. I feel it, I know it; and so, whatever happens, don't get discouraged. And remember, Tom, as long as I live, and I shall live long after Silas Loffden is dead, no harm

shall come to you. Wherever you are, if they get you away from me to-night, I will be near; and rather than Silas Loffden shall ruin your life, I will kill you, and then myself. But I don't think you need to fear anything of that kind from him for some time, at any rate. If I ever get within gun shot of him again, he's a dead man."

For half an hour, all was still. Then the keen ears of young Lovejoy detected the unmistakable sound of their approaching enemy. Slowly, stealthily, the rustling sound drew near.

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CHAPTER XIV.

MEANTIME.

The night that Harry Lovejoy had set out in pursuit of the kidnappers, Silas Loffden, who had been informed of what had happened by his villainous and treacherous servant, Jante, had also set out upon the same mission; but with a very different motive at heart in regard, at least, to the unfortunate girl.

Riding furiously back to the Kafir village where he had left his two treacherous associates, he came suddenly upon the old Zulu who, after Harry had left him, set out on his return to the home of the old hermit; and was, at the time when Loffden met him, scarcely a mile from the hermitage.

Dashing up to the old man, Loffden, uttering a horrible oath, cried out:

"Darn you, you yellow-livered snake eater! What are you doing here? Didn't I tell you if I caught you up to any tricks, that I would put a bullet through that dried-up old carcass of yours? Out upon you, you sneaking devil! What's up to-night that you go sneaking off to the old hermit's? Take that!" he hissed between his clenched teeth, and quick as flash he drew a pistol and fired; and then, without stopping, or even a parting glance to ascertain the effect of his shot,—for what need was there, he that could clip a pigeon in his swift flight with that self-same pistol, why need he look? He had aimed well, and hadn't the old man, almost be-



THE OLD HERMIT SPRANG LIKE A TIGER UPON THE COWERING ZULU, AND SEIZED HIM BY THE THROAT. P. 104.

fore the red fire had touched his bared head and shrunken chest, and with a cry of agony fell, even beneath the feet of that coal-black horse? No need for him to look; nor did he, but dashed away and was gone.

"Yah, yah, we shall see, we shall see! Some day, Boss Silas, I will pay it all back." And the old Zulu, who had so miraculously escaped death at the hand of his bitterest foe, sped on swiftly toward the lonely home of old Henry Lovell, the hermit.

"Ah, Zulu," said the old hermit as he admitted him, "something has happened—speak man, speak! How is it with young Harry and the girl—where are they?"

Breathlessly, he listened to the story which the old Zulu told.

"Ah, yah, we shall see, Boss Silas, we shall see!" cried the Zulu, livid with rage. "Yah, some day, Boss Silas, some day!"

"Ah, Zulu," declared the hermit, the day for action has, at last, arrived and vengeance is mine.

"Yah, yah, Boss Silas, we shall see, we shall see!" And the old Zulu's one snakey eye gleamed vindictively. "Yah, yah; some day Boss Silas, some day old Zulu will pay it all back—some day he will have courage to tell. Some day, some day, Boss Silas. Ah, yah, so you thought to rid yourself of old Zulu as you did of the others, because they knew and I know—ah, we shall see, we shall see. But he has come back—ah, he's a big, strong man now, Boss Silas, is little Harry. Ha, ha, we shall see, we shall—"

With a voice quivering with the most awful passion, with face as pale as death, while his eyes gleamed with that terrible fire, the old hermit sprang like a tiger upon

the cowering Zulu, and seizing him by the throat, cried:

"Imp of satan! O I have had a suspicion of this! Oh God!" he groaned, and releasing his hold of the old Zulu's throat, he sunk back into his chair exhausted and helpless.

"Ah, yah, we shall see, Boss Silas, we shall see!" muttered the old Zulu. Yah, Boss Henry, it was eighteen years ago—yah, yah, kill me if you will, as Boss Silas says you will, yah, yah, shoot me, shoot me, for I stole little Harry the same day that his mother died, and I gave him to old Silas Loffden. But he dared not to kill him. No, no, he hired an old woman to carry him away to America; for he thought that he would never come back, but he has—ah, yah, he's a big, strong man now—yah, yah, we shall see, Boss Silas, we shall see!" muttered the old Zulu. and his one eye gleamed viciously.

wo weeks had passed since the day that Tom and Harry set out on their visit to the mountains. Two long, dreary weeks—weeks of suffering, weeks of mourning, weeks of uncertainty, weeks of the most diligent and unremitting search, weeks of disappointment; for, search as they would, search as they did, no trace of the missing girl and her lover could be found. A feeling of gloom, a feeling of the most despairing sorrow had settled down upon the home of Aunt Jane. At last, the search was given up and, in utter despair, for no trace beyond the Kafir village could be found, though they had searched the country for a hundred miles around

and had sent descriptions to all the coast towns, they return home.

"Where was the old, white-haired hermit? Where was the bent and shriveled old Zulu? Surely they could tell something," was asked by many.

Ah, yes, and where was Silas Loffden?

"I told you so! I told you that it would end in blood!"

"But where are they?" were some of the many questions asked and conjectures made hy the neighbors of Aunt Jane's.

Here was a mystery which the good people of Perth were unable to solve. Discouraged, heartless and in despair, the father and his friends had given up the search and returned home, fully convinced that some awful tragedy had been enacted.

It was about this time that the old hermit and the Zulu returned from the Cape where they had been to make the final arrangements for the attaching of Loffden's stolen property, stopped at Perth.

The old hermit, as we have already heard, was no friend of James Winterstine, in fact, was his most bitter foe. But, since his meeting with little Tom, the very image of her mother, who, in days gone by, had found a place in his heart, that no other woman could fill, I say, since his meeting her, his heart had gone out to the sweet-faced girl and he had vowed, now, that her mother was dead, to bury his bitter enmity towards her father.

"Yes, yes," he mused, "I will go to James Winterstine and tell him all. My son—my long-lost boy—and his daughter—*her* daughter—God deliver them

from their enemies!—have come together to bridge the dark chasm of bitterest hate between us."

"Yah, yah," chimed in old Zulu, "we shall see, Boss Silas, we shall see!"

Two hours later, James Winterstine, sitting before the fire, with bowed head and aching heart, was aroused from his despairing reverie by a loud knock at the door.

"Lucy, child, bid them enter," said the father sadly; and sadly and silently, without even raising his head, the old man sat, staring into the fire, as the visitor entered and stood beside him.

"Father," said Lucy, "it is some one to see you."

Slowly the old man's head raised, and his eyes sought the face of his visitor. Instantly, a pallor as of death overspread his face and, staggering to his feet, he grasped the mantle for support.

James," said the old hermit, for it was he, "God has given me to see the error of my ways, and now, that *she* is dead, I have come in the hope of making amends for the wrong I have done *her* and you, by aiding *her* child."

Here the old man told the story of his meeting with Harry and little Tom; of her abduction and the attempt upon Harry's life. And then he told of the old Zulu's confession.

"God," he said, "has brought our children together to bridge the dark abyss between us. Let us pray God to deliver our children to us again."

And the two old men bowed their heads in silent, solemn prayer.

A ray of hope entered the aching heart of the almost distracted father at the reassuring words of the old hermit, who firmly believed that their children lived and that Harry would yet bring little Tom, in triumph, to her father.

"If any one can bring her back, Harry Lovejoy—Harry Lovell—is the man," declared the old hermit.

Long and earnestly these two old men sat and talked. For seventeen years they had been the most unrelenting foes and had, at one time, sworn, that if ever they met, one or the other must die, But now, the cause of this bitter enmity, the young and beautiful wife of James Winterstine, the mother of little Tom, was dead; the two old men clasped hands over the dark abyss, and vowed to forget the past.

"For her sake," said the old hermit, "I will forget and forgive, for she is *her* child and she loves my boy."

"Yah, yah, we shall see, we shall see!" muttered the old Zulu, who had been a silent spectator until now. "Ah, some day, Boss Silas, some day!"

And his one eye gleamed vindictively.

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CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH OF LOFFDEN.

"Tom," whispered Harry, as that low, ominous sound fell upon their ears. "Tom, they are coming. Promise me, darling, that, whatever happens, you will try to keep up your courage, and remember that I will come for you. Promise me, Tom, for it will help me, and it will help you."

"I promise," she answered.

Again came that low, rustling sound? it was nearer now. Nearer and still nearer, till it seemed to the waiting, anxious fugitives that they could reach out their hands and touch the creeping forms that caused it.

Then came a pause. Not a breath stirred, not a leaf quivered; the silence of death reigned for one brief moment; then came a rushing sound, followed by a chorus of wild, shrill yells from the savage Kafirs, as they rushed to the attack.

But clear and distinct above the din of the conflict rose the voice of Silas Loffden in command. Fearful were the oaths which he uttered.

With a revolver in each hand the dauntless Harry met the rush of his oncoming enemies. Quickly discharging his revolvers as best he could in the darkness, which rendered aim uncertain, he fought and struggled like a demon. Quickly emptying his revolvers, he fought his way back step by step till he saw that his only hope to make his escape was to break through the line of



"TAKE HER AWAY! TAKE HER AWAY!" P. 114.

howling demons that surrounded him, and run for his life.

"Oh, it looks like deserting little Tom," he cried, after falling back for a few yards, fighting desperately at every attack. Tom was already in the hands of the enemy, and the only hope was for Harry to make his escape, that he might come to her rescue.

"If I can get away," he mused, "I will rescue her yet."

"Kill him, kill him!" shouted Loffden. "Don't let him escape! Shoot him, curse the fool Yankee!" And seizing the arm of the terror-stricken girl, he dragged her from her shelter. "Ha, ha, my little beauty, so I have got you again, have I? Come, come, cheer up, darling, don't look so despondent," he said, gloating in his triumph. Then turning to the returning Kafirs, he demanded—

"Where's that Yankee devil? Speak, has he got away?"

"We kill him," answered a Kafir, evasively, "we shoot him an' he run off. Couldn't catch 'im, but me shoot 'im."

"Do you hear that, my dear little Tom? 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord'! Ha, ha!" laughed Loffden. "'Almighty now! but I will go and cut his heart out and feed it to the dogs, if I were not so lame; Almighty! what a pain I've got in my side where that cursed Yankee kicked me. Oh, but I will have his heart! I will have it; I will have to search his body to get that diamond, and I will have his heart too—curse him, curse him, I say! Yes, I must have that diamond, I'll need it, yes,

I'll need it! Ho there, Kafir, where's the body? Where's that cursed Yankee? Show me him!" demanded Loffden.

"No find, he run off," said one.

"Almighty!" cried Loffden in alarm. "Did you let him get away? Thunder! But I thought that you killed him!"

"No kill him, he get away," said another.

"Thunderation!" cried Loffden wildly, "let's get away from here. Come, come, lend me a hand, help me on to my horse—God, how my side hurts! I can't ride, you will have to fix the litter again and carry me; let the missy ride my horse. Come, come, carry me to the nearest village—oh, how my side hurts!"

Thus, commanding and pleading, moaning and cursing at every little jolt or jar, they carried him to the nearest village, some three miles away.

It was nearly morning when they reached the village on the knoll. It was a Kafir town, and here Jante was awaiting the return of his master.

Jante, who had received such a terrible blow that night upon the road, from the revolver in the strong hands of Harry Lovejoy, full over the right eye, which had caused the loss of that useful member, had gone to the village the evening before to purchase some provisions and to await Loffden's return or orders to move on and overtake him if he was not successful in capturing the fugitives that night. As he saw the Kafirs returning, bearing Loffden upon the stretcher, he muttered—

"Ah, Boss Silas, the devil has called for you at last,"

and he looked upon the suffering wretch without compassion.

Oh, you ugly devil!" cried Loffden, as his gaze fell upon the ugly visage of the Kafir. "Get out of here, you devil-cat! But stop, Jante, you must away to Perth and see how things is going there. If old Lovell's Zulu is not dead, as you say, then I need not return there. How far is it, Jante?"

"Three days hard ride," replied Jante in a surly tone.

"Three days! almost a hundred and fifty miles—well you must make it in six days. Now be off, and remember, you ugly devil, six days or, by the eternal, I will maul the liver out of you! Almighty, how my side hurts!" he groaned.

"Curse you, Boss Silas," muttered the unfortunate wretch. "I will pay you for all this yet! I will have that diamond; it's worth a million dollars. Oh, but can't I get gloriously drunk if I had all that money! Yes, I will have it; ha, ha! And so you think to send me away for six days, so's to give you a chance to get away from me, do you? Ah, we shall see, Boss Silas? There's two Dutchmen traders lives down to the next village that I used to know; I'll go and get them to help me—yes, yes, Boss Silas, I will pay you back." And thus he rode away toward Perth.

All day the wretched man lay and groaned. O, what a long, long day it seemed to poor little Tom! Though she was allowed to wander about the village under the ever watchful eye of an old Kafir woman, yet the hours

dragged out their weary length till it seemed the day would never end.

But it was a thousand times worse for the wretched Loffden; for he had rapidly grown worse and worse. That terrible kick in the left side was fast hastening him to eternity. It was several days after receiving it, before he noticed its effects, and then, scarcely noticing it, he had done nothing for it. It was while in pursuit of the fugitives that he had taken cold, and then commenced the trouble in real dead earnest; and it had rapidly grown worse till, upon this day, he had sunk, weak and exhausted, never to rise again.

One great good had resulted from this illness, little Tom was left alone. What might have happened, had it not been for this providential interference, God only knows. Be it as it may, Tom was spared.

Several times during the latter part of the day, he had asked Tom to come and sit beside him, which she did, however distasteful it may have been to her.

Kind-hearted, generous, little Tom could not refuse to administer what little comfort she could to this suffering man, though he was her most deadly enemy.

As night drew on, Tom was given permission to lie down in another room for the night. Thankful, indeed, she was, for she was tired and, as she had been up all the night before, she was soon asleep. But she had not slept long, when Loffden sent for her, asking her to come to him, for he was dying.

"O Tom!" he groaned, as she entered the room, "I am dying!" and almost crazed by the thought of death,

he begged the girl's forgiveness for the great wrong he had done her.

"O Tom!" he moaned, "you think that I am a bad man —yes, I am a bad man; but God made me bad, or the devil made me bad, that I, like all bad men, may show the dark side of life, the very shadows of hell, that the good and the beautiful may be more loved and appreciated. Tom, sweet, beautiful little Tom—hear me, Tom, don't turn away from a dying man, though I don't deserve it—I loved you, as only a bad, passionate man could love. I would have given my life for you. I would have sacrificed the life of any man, yes, of any number of men, for you. But it is all over now. O God!" he wailed, "if I had lived as you have lived; if I had been given, as you were, to Christian parents, I, too, might have lived a happy and useful life. Oh, my side, my side!" he gasped.

For a few minutes it seemed as if every breath would be his last, so terrible was his agony.

Bad man as he was, murderer as he was, one who had robbed her, perhaps for ever, of the man whom she loved; who had, possibly, blasted her every hope; when she looked upon his struggles in that close and, to him, terrible embrace of death—when she heard his horrified cries, which seemed the despairing cry of a lost soul, her heart, never too hard, softened and she pitied him in his misery.

With soft and gentle touch, she nursed him till midnight. Oh, the suffering, so terrible to behold! Writhing in the most excruciating agony, crying continually upon little Tom to save him from the dark horrors of

hell, beseeching her to pray to God for His mercy, to spare his life. It was a scene of suffering, of dark and awful agony of body and soul that no tongue could tell, no pen portray.

"Look! look!" he screamed, closing his eyes to shut out some horrible vision. "Look, they come, they come!" and shivering with terror, his features convulsed beyond all human resemblance, by that unutterable fear brought upon him by his dying vision. He struggled, he raved, he fought with imaginary demons. At last, exhausted and quivering like a leaf in the wind, with the cold perspiration pouring from every pore, and with that wild, inhuman look of a maniac, he fell back upon his bed and cried hoarsely:

"Take her away! Take her away! Curse you, Gretchen Beers, curse you I say. Take your icy fingers away from my throat! Curse you, unhand me, I say; you are choking me! O God! O Tom! Help, help! Murder, murder!" he shrieked.

So awful, so terrible were his cries; so wild and awful were his shrieks for help; so hideous, so fiendish were his looks, and so terrible and wicked were the oaths which he uttered; the imprecations which he hurled upon the imaginary, or perhaps to him real image of Gretchen Beers, the girl whom he had ruined and then murdered; and the legions of gloating demons and devils which, in his fevered imagination, hovered about him, assuming the most hideous forms with gleaming eyes and long, bony, claw-like fingers reaching out to grasp him; so awful, I say, were his looks and cries, that the superstí-

tious natives fled away in terror, leaving poor Tom alone in his awful presence.

Again and again, rang out upon the still midnight air, that awful shriek—"Take her away! Take her away!"

Feebler and feebler grew his voice, till it sunk to a low, hoarse whisper and then ceased altogether. But still his lips moved, though they uttered no sound. His eyes rolled wildly for a moment and then becoming fixed upon some object directly behind little Tom. For an instant there was a still wilder look and followed by such an unearthly shriek—the shriek, perhaps, of a lost soul hurled down into eternity—that fairly froze the blood in the veins of the little watcher. Three times, came the indescribable cry; fainter and fainter each time. The face became almost black, the eyes rolled up, then a convulsive shudder and all was still.

Tom stood as if paralyzed by some awful fear, stood gazing down into that hideous, distorted face, still now in death, when a step sounded behind her. In a moment more two strong arms folded about her and two hot, passionate lips pressed to her own, and she knew that she was held in the strong arms of her lover. O how happy was the thought! How her little heart fluttered, as her golden hair sunk upon his shoulder and she felt his warm passionate kisses upon her pale lips and cheek, at the glad, happy thought that her lover had come back to life, that she was with him again.

"O Tom," he said, referring to the scene which she had just passed through at the bedside of the dying man, "this is awful, this is terrible for such a gentle little girl to endure." And raising her in his strong arms, as

though she were but a child, he bore her into the other room and laying her upon the bed, he said:

"Lie still, Tom, for a little while, while I go and see after Loffden."

In a few minutes he came back, bringing the dead man's revolvers and gun and a goodly supply of ammunition.

"See, Tom," he said, placing the pistols in his belt, "we are armed now. Now we can fight our way back home. But Tom, I couldn't find your diamond; have you got it?" he asked.

"Yes, Harry," she answered, "I have got it. He never took it away from me." And then she told him the story of that awful night.

"Poor, little Tom!" murmured Harry, stroking her golden curls. "Brave little girl! God will remember you for your kindness, even to such a creature as Loffden."

"Ah," sighed Tom, "I know now what it was that he saw just before he died. He was looking at you, Harry."

"Yes," said Harry, "he was looking at me. I had just come in."

"O it was awful!" exclaimed the girl with a shudder at the recollection. "O it was awful to hear him talk of the devils and demons, and of poor Gretchen! He said she was choking him. Oh, how he cussed and swore! And then, at last, he saw you."

"Yes, he saw me, and he thought, I suppose, that it was my spirit come back to torment him. But come, Tom, you are rested a little now; come, I believe that we had better leave here before the people come back,

for there's no telling what they'll do. Does any one know anything about the diamond, Tom?" asked Harry.

"Yes, Jante knows."

"Jante—that's that devil that is always with Loffden?"

"Yes. He is the one that had me on his horse that night that you met us on the road and rescued me. Do you know, Harry, it was that last kick that you gave Loffden that caused his death?"

"No, is that it?" asked Harry.

"Yes, he has been complaining all day about his side," answered Tom.

"Well, he deserves his punishment. But where is Jante? He got over his knock, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Tom, "he got over it, though you knocked his eye out:"

"Gracious, but he must be an ugly looking devil now! Where is he?"

"Oh, he's horrible! Loffden sent him back to Perth to see how things are going there and—"

"Hark! I can hear some one coming," said Harry.

"Oh, it is Jante and somebody else with him. He didn't go back, for Loffden said 'twould take him six days to go there and back. See, they are going to the kraal with their horses. Yes, it is Jante; but who is it with him, I wonder?"

"That's more than I know; but there's one thing sure, they are no friends of ours. Just wait a bit and I'll go and see what's up," said Harry, going out.

Harry was gone but a few minutes, when he returned in haste.

"Quick, Tom!" cried Harry, "we've got no time to loose, come!" and starting out on a run, they set out for the woods.

"Hurry, Tom, hurry!" he whispered, dragging her rapidly on toward the woods. "If we can only reach the woods, we can dodge them. O that infernal dress of yours!" cried Harry. "You can't run with all those measley rags a flopping about your feet! But thank the Lord, a few more such rips as that and it'll be gone," he said, as her dress caught on a limb and tore a breadth or two out of it.

On, on, they flew. Jante and his associates were after them now.

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"NEVER!" HE EXCLAIMED, DRAWING HIS REVOLVER. P. 122.

CHAPTER XV.

AGAINST MEN AND DOGS.

On, on they ran. They had almost got out of sight in the darkness, when they heard shouts followed by the report of fire-arms and the sharp firing of bullets, which told them that they were discovered.

They were after them now. On, on flew the fugitives, till at last they reached the forest. Plunging into it's dark shadows, they were safely sheltered from their enemies bullets, but they dared not stop.

On, on they hurried in the darkness. They could hear the pursuers now as they came; there were more of them now, for the natives had joined in the chase. On they came, men shooting and dogs barking.

"They are driving us to the river," whispered Harry. "Can you swim, Tom?"

"Yes," she panted.

"Good!" exclaimed Harry. "But you will have to take off some of your rags, for the water is deep and runs swift, and you can't swim with your dress on. Ah, here we are, he said. "Come, quick, Tom, off with your outside clothes! Don't be afraid—off with 'em, for our lives depends on it." And suiting the act to the word, he stripped off his coat and vest.

"O Tom!" he cried, reproachfully, as she hesitated. "Am I to lose you again? Won't you do this for me?"

"Yes, yes," she replied, "I will."

"Here, give me your clothes," he said, "and I will tie

them up in my coat. There," he ejaculated, as he tied the bundle and flung them over his shoulder. "Come, Tom, take hold of my belt and hang on, so we won't get separated in the darkness. Hold fast, Tom," he said, encouragingly, as he led the brave little girl out into deep water; and then, with long, powerful strokes struck out into the dark, swift tide.

On gaining the middle of the stream, they turned down and swam along with the swift, rolling current.

Their pursuers had gained the river bank by this time and were running swiftly up and down the shore in search of canoes which were soon found and, in them, set out in pursuit.

On, on, down the swift tide the fugitives swam. They could hear the splash of the paddles; they could hear the voices of the men—they were near to them now. Ah, there was one canoe that had gone past them on the right; there was one just even with them on the left; would they be discovered?

The canoe on the left, turned to right and shot directly in ahead of them.

"Easy, Tom, easy," whispered Harry. "Come this way and let's see if we can get to the shore. Ah, here's a good place to land; the shore is low and swampy—one of those low and swampy jungles—yes, we'll try it." And swimming noiselessly to the shore, they crawled out and started across the narrow strip of sand that separated the river from the jungle.

"Keep close to me, Tom, so they won't see your white clothes," whispered Harry, trying to hide her from the pursuers.

But the keen-eyed Kafirs had seen something white creeping swiftly from the river to the jungle; and, in a moment, were paddling swiftly toward the spot.

"After them, after them!" shouted Jante, who happened to be in one of the nearest boats. "Almighty, it is they! Here's the missy's track."

"Where are they? Which way have they gone?" shouted one of the Bosses, who came running up. "Where are they Jante, where are they?"

"In the jungle, Boss Fritz. Come, let's follow—where are the dogs?" cried Jante, excitedly.

Shortly, the dogs were brought and put upon the trail.

"Oh, the dogs!" wailed Tom. "They are after us. O God!" she cried in despair, as a few minutes after entering the swamp they heard the dogs give tongue as they set off on the trail.

"Darn the dogs!" muttered Harry. "I'll silence their tongues if they'll come near enough so I can see them."

On, on, through the swamp hastened the fugitives; sometimes wading in water up to their arm-pits, sometimes on dry land, sometimes crawling upon their hands and knees through the growth of bushes, sometimes running swiftly through the air.

On came the pursuers, or three of them at least—Jante and the two Dutchmen—for the natives, not having any particular motive of their own in the pursuit, had stopped at the edge of the jungle.

Guided by the two dogs who were very careful to keep at a safe distance, the pursuers had no difficulty in following the fugitives.

They were gaining now, for little Tom was so exhausted by her long flight that she was scarcely able to keep on her feet.

"O Harry," cried Tom, "leave me and save yourself! They will murder us both if they catch us. Leave me —perhaps that they'll take pity on me because I am only a girl and not murder me. But they will kill you and me too, for fear I might testify against them. Kiss me, Harry, and ask God to protect me, then go."

"No, Tom, I will never do that. If they get you away from me again, then I will do the best I can to escape that I may come to your rescue; but I will never give you up—never!" he declared.

"O Harry—"

"Hush—they are coming," interrupted Harry.

"Go, Harry, while you can," coaxed Tom.

"Never!" he exclaimed; and drawing his revolver, just as Jante burst into view from the dense growth of jungle grass, his one eye gleaming and a smile of triumph upon his ugly visage, Harry sent a bullet crashing through his ugly head.

Then commenced a skirmish in the darkness. For an hour it lasted, without loss to either side; when finally, the besieging party drew off.

"Now what?" asked Tom. "What do they mean now?"

"I don't know," replied Harry. "Perhaps they'll wait for daylight. If they do, just let them wait, they won't gain anything by it. I can shoot better in the daytime, too."

"More likely that one of 'em will go for help," suggested Tom.

"Devil take the whole Kafir nation!" exclaimed Harry. "I wouldn't wonder but that's just what they are up to."

"Let's don't wait to see," cried Tom. "Let's get out of here. Come, I am rested a little now. But, O Harry! Where are my clothes? What have you done with them?"

"Crotch-al-hemlock!" exclaimed Harry in dismay. "I don't know—I never thought of them before. I have lost them somewhere sure."

"O dear! what shall I do?" wailed poor Tom.

"Never mind, Tom," said Harry, consolingly; "you are better dressed now than the young ladies of this country are in the habit of dressing. You don't look bad; you make a pretty good looking boy—most too good looking. If it wasn't for your hair and you were not quite so pretty, we might pass you off for a boy all right."

"O Harry, please don't make fun of me! I ain't to blame—I did just as you told me to."

"Tom, I am not making fun of you, I never was more in earnest in all my life. I mean every word I say and more too."

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"Just this," said Harry, "let's make a boy of you—"

"O Harry, I can't—I—"

"But you can, Tom. Let me fix you up; it will save us lot's of trouble and it may save our lives, too. It will throw our enemies off the track and you won't attract so much attention—for a pretty girl is a rare sight in this country and will attract more attention than Barnum's great show does in America."

During this conversation, the fugitives had been making all the time that they possibly could on their flight. Having gained the high ground now, they found the way easier and less difficult, and as a consequence made better time; and as it was nearly morning, and hearing nothing of their pursuers, they stopped to rest.

"Here's a good place beside this old log," said Harry. "Come and lie down. I will cover you up with leaves and you can lie there and sleep for a while, while I rustle around and get something for our breakfast. There," he said, "that's a good bed;" and covering her with leaves, he sat down beside her and watched. A half hour passed and, as little Tom was sleeping soundly and there was no signs of their pursuers, Harry had dropped off into a doze and sat nodding dreamily when the cry of a parrot startled him.

"Well, well," he yawned, rousing himself; "well, I do believe I was almost asleep." Arising, he paced to and fro for a few seconds, then stopping, he looked down upon the sweet, innocent face of the little sleeper and muttered:

"Poor Tom, I know that you are just about starved. I wonder if I can't find something that we can eat? If I only dared to shoot, I could soon provide us a good square meal; but I dare not do it. But I will see what I can find." So saying, he started off, watching all the while for any indication either of food or enemies.

Some twenty minutes had passed and he had had the rare good luck to find some wild fruit that looked delicious to his hungry eyes, that was sweet and juicy to the taste

Gathering what he could carry in his arms, he hurried back, thinking what a pleasant surprise it would be for little Tom.

But alas! the surprise was on the other hand and of altogether a different nature than pleasant; for, on reaching the place where he had left his little companion, he found to his horror and dismay that she was gone.

"O my God!" he cried, as he stood horrified and for a time unable to think or act. "O my God, she is gone, she is gone!"

"Tom, Tom!" he shouted, but no answer came. What could he do?

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CHAPTER XVI.

SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

But young Harry was not a man that would give up in despair. Dearly as he loved little Tom, and terrible as was the shock, he did not for a moment give up to his feelings; but setting himself about, he soon discovered the cause of his companion's disappearance.

Yes, there were the tracks of two men—undoubtedly the two Dutch bosses whom Jante had brought from the Kafir village to help him procure the diamond. They had followed, not daring to attack the fugitives openly, hoping to gain some advantage—to steal upon him unawares. They had seen Harry when he set out to search for food and had watched and waited till he was out of sight, then had crept upon the sleeping girl and carried her away.

"O Harry!" she murmured, as she felt herself dragged from her warm nest; and opening her sleepy eyes, she looked up into the rough, bearded faces of the two Dutchmen. But before she could utter a cry, a rough hand was placed over her mouth and she was dragged swiftly away.

On reaching the shelter of the dense forest, the kidnappers paused and, turning upon the frightened girl, demanded—

"De tiamondt, missie, vare ish de tiamondt!"

"O sir!" cried Tom. "Will you let me go if I will give you the diamond?"



TOM HANDED HIM THE DIAMOND. P. 127.

"Yah, yah, mine leetle missie. Gafe us de tiamondt und ve leffy you goes."

"Thank you, mynheer Fritz," cried Tom, joyously; and she handed him the diamond.

"Ha, yah, missie Tom, yer knows ole Fritz?" said the boss, eying her suspiciously.

"May I go now, mynheer?" pleaded Tom, anxiously.

"Nine; you cooms mit us," growled old Fritz.

"But you said I might go—"

"Yah, yah, you goes mit us right avay off kwick as tam," he said.

"I won't do it!" cried Tom, angrily. "Let me go!" she cried, struggling desperately with the two strong men as they seized her and hurried her away.

On through the woods for a couple of miles they hurried, when they came out into a broad trail made by a traders' caravan.

Following the trail for a mile, they came upon the traders just as they were starting out for a long day's journey.

"Ah!" exclaimed old Fritz, "they are Moors; yah, ve sells leetle missie to oom. She puys us soom grub und soom whiskey. Yah, yah, dot ish besser, py jing. Ve not keeps him, for she makes us trooble all de time, und ve not kills him, for dot fool Harry leaves us alone not any more, nine never, py jing."

So saying, he sought the trader who, happening to be an old man and having all the wives, perhaps, that he could well support, some three or four of whom were with him—perhaps that that had some influence with him—declined to purchase. But after some further

parleying and a good deal of talk upon the part of the Dutchmen, an offer was made by the old shark and was quickly accepted by Tom's captors.

All day the caravan hurried along beneath a burning sun. Though Tom was well provided for, as she had a seat with the other women up on the camels, it seemed to her that the day would never come to an end. But it did; for, as I presume, in fact I have heard, that all things must end, so ended this day.

The caravan went into camp near a small village, where they would stop for a day to trade with the natives.

Tom was well provided for, and in spite of her anxiety for her lover, and being so tired and sleepy, was soon fast asleep.

How long she had slept, she knew not, but it was midnight or after when she awoke and looked about her. Everything was still. The women were all asleep.

"Now," she said to herself, "is my time", and creeping silently from the tent, she soon found herself alone. The old trader had no fear of her trying to escape—not knowing anything about her previous history—and had left her at liberty to share the tent with the other women.

"Now," mused Tom, "is my time. I know Harry will be on the watch for me and I will go"; and stealing softly from the camp, she crept away in the darkness.

On, on, till the outer edge of the camp was reached, and then just as Tom, with a low murmured "Thank

God!" started down the road, a dark form rose up directly before her and, before she had time to cry out, she was seized in a pair of strong arms and dragged into the dark, impenetrable shadows of the jungle.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE DYING DUTCHMAN. HARRY MAKES A TRADE. A TRAGEDY.

Hardly had Tom and her captor reached the shelter of the jungle, when two men appeared. They were hurrying away from the caravansary and were soon beyond sight.

Till now, Tom was unconscious as to who her captor was; but now, in a low whisper, he said:

"Tom, Oh, thank God that I happened to see you when you left the trader's tent. I knew that you were in there with the women and I was waiting for an opportunity to rescue you, when I saw you leave the tent, and I hastened here to head you off. If you had got away without my seeing you, there's no telling what might have happened, or when I would have found you again."

"O Harry," murmured the girl, clasping her bare arms about her lover's neck and returning the warm kisses which he pressed upon her red lips. "Oh, thank God that it was you instead of those two men who just passed, that caught me."

"Do you know who they were, Tom?" asked Harry.

"Yes; they are the two Dutchmen that Jante brought with him from the Kafir village. One of them is old Fritz Wagonblast. He used to live at Kimberly and he worked for father a while. They have got our diamond —"The Star of Kimberly."

"Ah, I know him—he is trading, or has been, with



HE FOUND QUITE A RESPECTABLE-LOOKING BOY AWAITING HIM. P. 138.

the natives up here. They will strike out for the coast. Do you know the other one's name?"

"No, I don't know what his name is. Fritz called him Joe."

"Well, it don't make any difference; they've got the diamond and we will follow them—they can't escape us. No, by the gods, they shall not have it, Tom."

"Let them have it, Harry, darling, it has been a curse to us. Oh, I wish that we had never found it—it has been the cause of all our trouble. Do you know, Harry, there is a story connected with that stone? I heard Loffden telling Fritz and Oden about it. He said that it was stolen and lost up there in the mountains some twenty-five years ago. It's been a curse to everybody that has ever had anything to do with it. Let them have it, Harry."

"No, Tom, I swear they shall not have it," he said, resolutely. "They are making for the coast and that's just where we want to go, so come; let's after them."

Nearly all the rest of the night they tramped on following the caravan trail which led to the coast. Along toward morning they left the road and went out into the woods to rest a while.

"We'll be safe here, Tom, I think," said Harry; "so lie down a while and rest." And lying down together in the shelter of a dense thicket, they slept for a couple of hours when Harry, awakening just as the sun was rising above the hill tops, arose, and for a few moments stood gazing down upon the fair little creature sleeping so peacefully.

"Oh," he said, regretfully, "it's too bad, but we must

be going. Tom, Tom," he called, shaking her gently. "Come Tom, my poor little girl; wake up, I know you are tired and sleepy, but we must go. Tom, cau't you wake up?"

"Oh," she sighed, turning over and stretching her weary limbs. "Oh, I'm so sleepy." But she got up; and rubbing her sleepy eyes till she got them fairly open, she announced that she was ready for breakfast.

"Luckily, Tom, I made a raise of some dried meat and some bread yesterday, so we won't have to fast this morning. My, but I've got an appetite like a young hyenna," said Harry, producing his stock of provisions.

"Me too," laughed Tom. "I never was so near starved in all my life," she declared, devouring her share of the breakfast in a manner that did not belie her words.

"Tom," said Harry, meditatively, "will you let me make a boy out of you?"

"Make a boy of me! What more do I need? My clothes come as near being like yours as you can fix them; all the difference is the color. Mine are white—no they ain't, but they were once—and my sleeves arn't quite so long."

"Sleeves," interrupted Harry, scanning her critically, "I fail to see anything of the kind."

"I don't care," she ejaculated; "they are sleeves just the same—they are a little short I know, and my—my—"

"Pants," laughed Harry. "That's what we call 'em."

"Well, they only come to my knees, but that's an

advantage, so I don't care. I look as well as you do, so there."

"Better, Tom, better—lot's better. But you are getting your arms and—and shoulders pretty badly sunburned."

"Oh, I don't care for that, but they are getting so sore—but I can't help it, I suppose. If it hadn't been for my hair, I would have been burned to a blister yesterday."

"And there's just where the trouble is, Tom; your hair—no boy would have such a head of hair. We must—"

"O Harry!" cried poor Tom in dismay, for she understood now what he was driving at. "O my hair, my hair!" she wailed, and drawing her beautiful golden hair, which hung far below her waist in a mass of shining gold about her shoulders, she burst into tears.

"There, there, Tom, don't cry," coaxed Harry. "We won't cut it off. No, no, little girl, it's too pretty to lose, besides it protects you. It don't matter, Tom, if people do know that you are a girl; we couldn't disguise you anyway. Just let 'em look if they want to; it won't do them any particular good, nor you any harm. If they knew what we know, they wouldn't wonder, Tom, that we are a little short of clothes."

"Oh, I am so glad," cried the girl, joyously. "I don't care if people do laugh at me, if I can only keep my hair."

"Keep it, Tom, and let them laugh if they want to. It hides your bare shoulders and is almost as good as a coat. But come, Tom, let's be off again," said Harry.

And so they took up their weary march toward the sea-coast which, as they learned from some natives, was some sixty miles distant.

Several times during the day, they learned by inquiry that the two Boors were not far in advance of them, and were making for Port Orange.

Along toward evening they stopped for a few hours to rest, and then set out upon their march again.

As they were passing through a dark wood, walking arm in, talking of—no, no, I won't tell; that is, I promised not to tell, because it was a delicate subject and not particularly interesting to other than they. But I say, as they were passing the deepest and darkest part of the wood, they were suddenly brought to a standstill by hearing an unearthly groan almost beneath their feet.

"O!" screamed Tom, for just then a hand reached out in the darkness and grasped her ankle.

In an instant Harry was upon the man, for man it was, and had grasped him by the throat.

"O Got!" groaned the poor wretch. "O Got, I'm kilt, I'm kilt!"

"Mynheer Fritz," cried Tom, "is that you?"

"Yah, yah. O Got, O missie, I'm kilt!" he groaned.

"Who killed you, man?" asked Harry.

"O mine Got, I'm kilt, I'm kilt!" he groaned.

"Who killed you, Ohm Fritz?" asked the girl, pityingly.

"O mine Got im himmel! I'm kilt, und he's got de tiamondt. O mine Got, mine Got, I'm kilt!"

"Ah, Tom," said Harry, "I see through it all now.

That fellow that was with him has murdered him for the diamond."

"Yah, yah, he got de tiamondt und kilt me, und robt me! O mine Got, I'm kilt, I' kilt!"

"Who was it with you, Fritz? What was his name?" asked Harry.

"O mine Got, I'm kilt, I'm kilt!" groaned the Dutchman.

"And he's got the diamond has he?" querried Harry.

"Yah, yah, he stole him. O mine Got in himmel! He stole him, he stole him und kilt me," he groaned.

"Serves you right," declared Harry.

"O mine Got, mine Got, I'm kilt, I'm kilt," groaned the dying man.

"Come, Tom, there's no use of wasting time here," declared Harry. "We can't do anything for him—besides I wouldn't if I could. He tried to kill me and he robbed you and then sold you for a slave, after promis- to let you go if you would give him the diamond. Come on, Tom," he said, taking her hand and dragging her away.

"O Harry, it's too bad to leave him to die here alone," cried the tender-hearter girl.

"I know it, Tom, but we can't do anything for him, so let's go."

It was long after midnight when they left the dying man and again took up their weary march. For several hours they tramped on and then, just as day was breaking, they turned from the road and entered the forest and lay down to rest.

When Harry awoke, after an hour's refreshing sleep,

the sun was well up and he was nearly starved; so waking up his little companion, they set out on their march again, munching their scanty breakfast as they went along.

They were nearing the coast now, for the country was settled some, and occasionally they saw people in the fields at work.

"I wonder," said Harry, "if we can't trade for a suit of clothes for you, Tom. See that boy over there herding sheep, he's just about your size, Tom; let's go and see if we can't trade with him."

"What have we got to trade? We haven't got so much as a penny between us, and you certainly can't spare any of your clothes," said Tom.

"But you can, Tom. We'll banter him for a trade anyhow, come along."

"O Harry, don't make fun of me," cried Tom, reproachfully.

"I arn't making fun of you, Tom. Come on, let's try him," he urged.

"No, no; he won't trade with us. I can't—I don't want to—I—we ain't got anything to trade," persisted Tom, too bashful to make the attempt.

"I will trade one of my revolvers," said Harry. "But he won't trade unless you will let him have your clothes to wear till he gets home—don't you see, Tom? He hasn't got but one suit on I venture, and perhaps nowhere else either—these Boors are not very well heeled in the clothes line. Come on."

"I won't do it. You go and I will stay here till you come back," agreed Tom, reluctantly.

"All right, here goes," laughed Harty. "I'll bet you a new dress that I trade with him"; and he set out on his errand.

In the course of a half hour, Tom, who had been lying in the shade awaiting the result of Harry's trading, was no little amused and considerably confused at the reappearance of Harry who, with a look of triumph, threw a pair of home-spun, home made pants and a shirt of the same stripe at her feet.

"There," he laughed, "tell me I'm no trader. They are brand new, too, so the boy said; and he never wore them before to-day—they are his Sunday clothes, for to-day is Sunday."

"It's wicked to trade on Sunday," said Tom.

"Can't help it, Tom; but hurry and put them on or you'll get sun-burned. Just whistle when you are ready," said Harry, and he turned and walked away out of sight.

In a few minutes, Tom called that she was ready.

"See if I am all right, Harry."

"Y–e–s," he said, turning her around. "They fit you just splendid—couldn't be better. Now, if you had a new pair of shoes and a hat, you would be fixed."

"Oh, I don't mind a hat—I don't wear it one-half the time when I am at home; and my shoes are good enough. Oh, I am 'fixed,' as you call it. But dear me! they feel awful uncomfortable," she complained.

"Fashion is a tyrant," said Harry. "It would be lot's more comfortable if we didn't have to wear clothes, like those Zulu Kafirs."

"Come, come; you ain't half so anxious about the boy; hurry up and carry him the clothes."

"All right; you fix up while I am gone," he said, as he set out to carry the boy his clothes.

When Harry returned he found quite a respectable looking boy awaiting him.

"Well, now we are ready," he exclaimed, "so let's be off. It's only five miles further to Port Orange. Two hours and we'll be there; then we'll get a passage on board some vessel and will soon reach the Cape, and then, Tom—"

"O Harry!" cried Tom, joyously. "Then we will be home. It seems almost a year since I left home. Do you know how long it has been?"

"No, I don't know," replied Harry. "I have lost all track of time; but it must be nearly two months, or will be by the time we get home."

By the time they get back! Ah, could they have looked into the future and seen what was in store for them, their steps would not have been so light, their hearts would not have bounded so joyously at the glad prospect that their suffering was about over, that they would soon be home again. But the future was not revealed. Perhaps we ought to feel thankful that we cannot see what is in store for us, that we cannot look into the future, unless all of the darker part could be concealed, revealing only the pleasant side of the story—but then, here's a point: Could they have foreseen what was in store for them, they would never have ventured upon that remarkable and fateful excursion to the mountains; consequently this story would never have been written—a great loss, surely.

However, our friends arrived at the Port in due time

and, with light hearts, repaired to the Sailor's Home, a sort of tavern and the only one which the town afforded.

"We'll have a good, square meal, Tom," said Harry, and his mouth "watered" at the thought.

"But how will we get it, Harry," querried Tom, "we haven't a penny, nor anything to trade."

"We'll have it just the same," he declared "Here, here's a tavern; come on and I'll show you."

On entering the bar-room which was pretty well filled at the time, and before going ten feet, they came face to face with the Dutchman who aided old Fritz in robbing them of the diamond and afterward murdered him and left him on the road in the woods alone to die, where Tom and Harry had found him.

For an instant both men stood and glared upon each other and then, quick as lightning, two revolvers flashed, two reports rang out, followed by a wild, agonized shriek from the Dutchman who, throwing up his hands, fell back upon the floor, dead. At the same time, Harry staggered forward and, before little Tom could catch him, fell prone across the body of the Dutchman.

With a wild, frightened cry, poor Tom sprang forward and kneeling beside her stricken lover, tried to raise him.

"O my God," she wailed, "he is dead, he is dead!" And weeping most bitterly, the poor child called upon the people to help her carry him to a place where she could lay him down and have his wound attended to if he was not dead.

In a moment he was taken to another room and laid upon a lounge, while water and restoratives were brought.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOME-WARD BOUND.

But Harry was not dead, in fact, was almost uninjured. Though he had a very narrow escape, as the bullet from his opponent's pistol had grazed his head, cutting an ugly gash over the right temple and almost in the same place where Loffden's bullet had struck him; yet it was not serious and only stunned him for a few seconds.

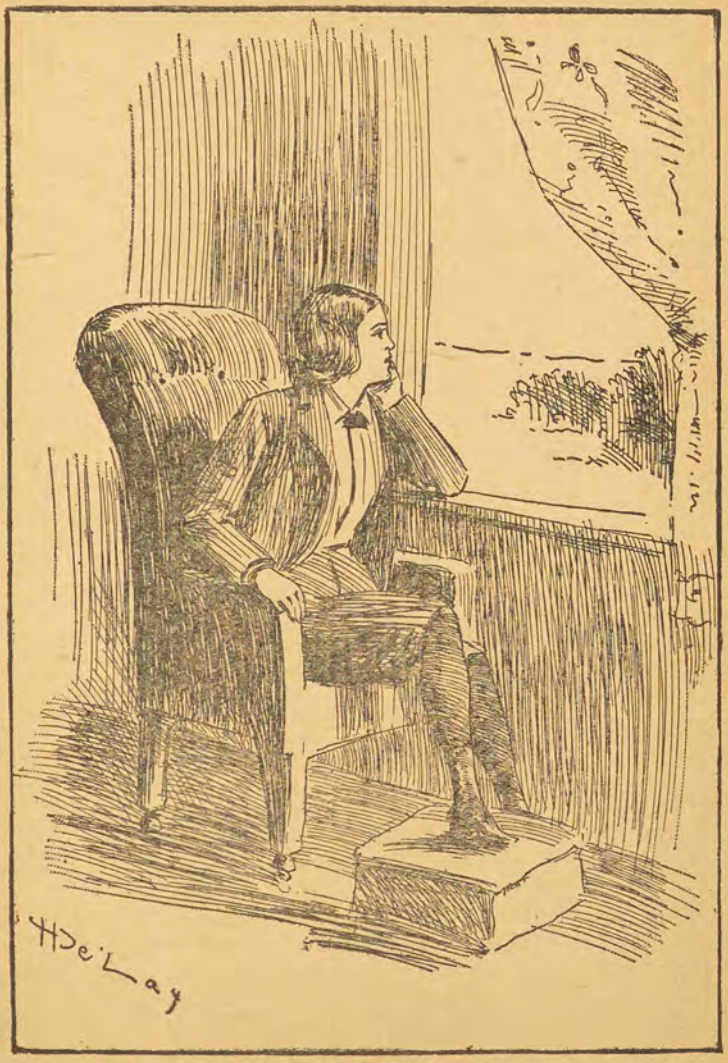
"O Harry, my darling, my darling," cried the girl, heedless of the vast crowd that had gathered around, heedless of the questioning, admiring glances of the rude, rough men, heedless of all save the joy of her pure, young heart as she saw that her lover was not dead; and throwing her arms about him, she kissed him again and again.

"Ask some one to bring me some water," whispered Harry.

"He wants water," said Tom, "please some one bring him some water."

"Give way, give way!" came in the stentorian tones of old Hans Grauerholty, the tavern keeper, pushing his way through the crowd. "Stan' beck poys und gifs us blenty of room. Here, here, missie," said the portly, good-natured Hans, as he brought the water.

"Here, Harry," urged Tom, holding the water to his lips, "here's water; drink and then I will bandage your wound."



TOM WAS LOOKING OUT OF THE OPEN WINDOW. P. 143.

In a few minutes the ugly gash was washed and bandaged and then Harry was able to sit up.

"There," exclaimed old Hans, "dot ish besser as good! Now cooms mit meer and I gifs zee ain teener and zee rests."

Following old Hans into the dining room, they were greeted by the fat, jolly landlady and her buxom daughter, who were busily engaged with the dinner tables.

"Here," said Hans, leading Harry to a sofa, "zee lays down und rests vile mine frau he gets ine teener retty right away of kuick."

"Ohm Hans," said Tom, "we have no money to pay you now, but we will pay you sometime."

"Yah, yah, min frauline, dot ish all right—yoost you nefer mind apoudt dot monish."

And turning he entered the kitchen and said to his frau and daughter—

"By shiminy, I peliefs dot ish old Vinterstine's gals vot was shtole avay mit her lofers und dot great, pig tiamondts. By collies, but dot was a prety pig shtories apoudt that tiamondts. Dey calls him de 'Shtar of Kimberly'. Chiminetti! I wonder mich if dey have got him now?"

After telling his old frau of his suspicions as to their guests identity, and bidding her prepare for them a good dinner, he returned to the bar-room to see after the removal of the dead stranger.

By this time the excitement had pretty well nigh subsided, for a shooting affray at the port was no unusual occurrence. Though this was a little out of the regular

order of such happenings, and created considerable excitement at the time, it nevertheless soon died out and all was quiet again.

Port Orange, settled by people from all nations and situated upon the very out-skirts of civilization, became the rendevous of toughs of every description. Such a state of affairs prevailing, it is not to be wondered at that this affair created so little attention. Four entire strangers, who had not been in the town a half hour, met and fought.

Many were the comments passed upon the beautiful little girl, dressed in boy's clothes, and the brave, broad-shouldered young fellow whom she had called her darling. Everybody enquired of everybody else if they knew who they were, where they came from, or where they were going, what their business was, and what caused the fight; but no one knew—old Hans kept his own counsel.

"Yah, yah," he muttered, "I peliefs dot ish old Vinterstine's missie. If it ish, den it was moach besser dot de beeples don't know him, for efrypody knows apoudt dot great pig tiamondts und dot gals. Yah, yah, I yoost keep 'em oudt of sight till deese crowds gets away mit here."

In a few minutes our two friends sat down to the first regular meal that it had been their good fortune to partake of for nearly two months.

Both were nearly famished and did ample justice to the bountiful repast spread before them.

"O myl" exclaimed Tom, as she pushed her chair back from the table, "this is the first time I have had

enough to eat since I can remember. I am ready now for another trip. But, o Harry! you don't feel good, I know—your head must hurt awful bad!"

"I don't care for my head; that ain't what I was thinking of; what interests me now is: How shall we get away from here? I don't like this town; we must get away from here just as soon as possible. I heard old Hans talking to his wife and, if I am not badly mistaken, he mentioned your name. Of course the story of that diamond is known all over the country by this time. I don't know that any one would bother us if they knew us, but I wouldn't like to chance it just the same."

"Oh, I don't believe that he knows me, Harry—how could he?"

"Quite likely a description of you has been sent to him—but it don't matter. We will get away from here just as soon as we can anyway."

Returning to the sitting room they sat down upon the sofa, together.

Tom was looking out of the open window. There was an expression of deep thought upon her fair face; her wide, blue eyes were looking wistfully across the water; her soft, red lips slightly parted, while her fair cheeks glowed with a strange light that reflected the thoughts of her innocent, maidenly heart.

"Tom," asked Harry, and it aroused the girl with a start, "Tom, what are you thinking about?"

"Won't tell you, Harry," declared Tom, with a shy glance up into his honest, gray eyes.

"'Taint fair, Tom," he returned, "I always tell you everything—I'll tell you what I was thinking of."

"Tell on, Harry; what is it?"

"It's just this: If that fellow that I laid out in the other room there has got any friends here, they may try to make trouble for us."

"But is it likely, Harry, that he has, or that they could do anything even if they were to try?" asked Tom.

"There's no telling, Tom, what they could do or what they might try to do. There are plenty of bad men here —just as bad as Loffden or those two Dutchmen and just as capable of doing us mischief. Because we are here among civilized people, guarantees us no great amount of safety. If any one should suspicion us—"

"But Harry, how could they? Besides we haven't got the diamond now."

"That's what I was coming to, Tom. We have got the diamond. I—"

"O Harry!"

"Yes, it's so—Iv'e got it. I saw it when that Dutchman fell. He had it tied up in an old handkerchief and tied in his belt. I knew what it was and that's why I fell on to him. I pretended to be stunned, but I wasn't. I was afraid that some one might have seen that I was up to something, but maybe they didn't."

"O Harry, I am so sorry. I thought that we were rid of that fateful stone. Oh, I am afraid of that evil thing. Do you know, Harry, that that man lying in there makes fifteen that I know of that have lost their lives on account of it?" said Tom, with a shudder.

"I don't care, Tom, the stone belongs to you—you found it and by the eternal, they shall not take it away from you!" said Harry.

"I would a thousand times rather that they should have it than for you to risk your life and suffer as you have for it. Risking your own life and taking the lives of others because of that miserable, glittering thing."

"Tom," exclaimed Harry, reproachfully, "do you mean to tell me that I have done what I have for that 'Devil's Eye?' That's the best name that I know for it."

"Harry, O Harry!" cried Tom, "I didn't mean anything of the kind. O don't think that of me."

"I don't want to Tom—it isn't like you to judge me so—it was for you Tom, that I have done what I have done and not for that bloody gem," said Harry, earnestly.

"I know it, I know it! I don't know what made me speak that way—I never thought—I didn't mean it—I—I—"

"Sh—don't cry—some one is coming," said Harry; and a moment later old Hans entered the room.

"Vell, vell, mine friendts," he exclaimed good naturedly, "I ish more a gladt dot ze ish besser now!"

"Thank you Ohm Hans," said Tom. "You are very kind to us and I hope that we will be able to pay you all back some day."

"Vell yah, dot is all right mine frauline. I yoost could do not any too mooch for ze. I knows ier farder once—yah, yah, peliefs dot ze are old James Winterstine's missie. Yah, yah, dot ish him!"

"O sir—Ohm Hans, if you know anything of us, for heaven's sake don't mention it to any one!" pleaded Tom.

"Nine, nine, mine leetle missie; fear ier not—ole Hans is no fool."

"Ohm Hans," does any one here know anything of us or that man in there?"

"Vell I tells you—efry pody knows all apondt dot tiamondst, vot day galls him de 'Shtar of Kimberly,' und day knows apondt dot missie vot vas shtole mit him avay, und some dey tinks dot she, he ish ier. Now I toles ze yoost vot to do. I goes ze right avay from here quick off mit dose tiamondts already. Dere ish mine vessel yoost reaty to shtart und ze goes mit her off und I makes him right mit de captains."

"Ohm Hans, exclaimed Harry, grasping the old fellow's hand and shaking it heartily, "we will remember you and some day we will pay you for this."

"Vell, vell, dot ish all right—I sees der captains right avay, alreaty—you cooms mit meer."

"Yes, yes," said Tom, "we are ready." And following him, they arrived in a few minutes on board the ship, Cape Town, and soon had the satisfaction of having everything arranged for the passage.

The ship, freighted with its cargo of merchandise and some twenty passengers, including Tom and Harry, soon weighed anchor and floated proudly out at sea.

O what a feeling of glad delight, of heart-felt thankfulness filled the bosom of little Tom as she realized that she was out of the dark, dangerous land where they had encountered so many hardships and dangers, and were speeding swiftly toward home.

"Homeward bound!" cried Harry.

"Thank God!" murmured Tom.



THE CAPTAIN SURVEYED LITTLE TOM AS SHE STOOD A FEW PACES OFF. P. 147.

CHAPTER XIX.

LOST AT SEA.

"Blast my my head-lights!" exclaimed old Captain Marlin as he turned in his walk on the deck and surveyed little Tom, as she stood but a few paces off. "Blast my eyes! but I believe that that gal's old James□Winterstine's darter—Lord-a-mighty-now; but she's a beauty an' no mistake, sartin. But what in the name of—— is she dressed up in boys clothes for? God almighty now, if that story old Hans told me to-day is true, about that diamond once the 'Star of Kimberly'—but blast my eyes, now, if I could tell which was the 'Star,' the gal or the diamond. Some how I don't just exactly like this—a-h-e-m, M-r-r-r—"

"Lovejoy," said Harry. "Harry Lovejoy."

"Ahem, a very pleasant evening, Mr. Lovejoy," and he cast an inquiring glance upon little Tom.

"Very pleasant, indeed, captain," returned Harry taking the proffered hand of the old sea-captain and, noticing the inquiring glance, he said:

"Let me, Captain Marlin, introduce you to my wife—little Tom, I call her."

The captain ahemed, rubbed his bald pate and finally bawled out in his gruff tones:

"A-h-e-m—blast my head-lights now! He knew it, he knew it all the while, old Hans Granerholtz did—God almighty now, he's run a drive and we–God almighty, he knew it."

"Knew what, captain?" asked Harry, rather taken back by the captains unrestrained embarrassment.

"God almighty now! Ahem—I might just as well tell it—I—I—ahem, I—that is, if the crew knew that—that —I a-h-e-m—that is, if they knew—if they were aware that the 'Star of Kimberly' was aboard us, they would desert the ship before night," stammered the captain.

"What do you know about the 'Star of Kimberly', captain? What does the crew know about it? How do you—what makes you think that it's aboard you? What is the 'Star of Kimberly,' anyway?" asked Harry, somewhat confused at the turn of events.

"Godlemighty yes! it's old Winterstine's darter—and she found it, a great, blood-red diamond—the devil's own gem, so they say, and it brings ill-luck and disaster upon every one that has anything to do with it. Godlemighty now! they do say that it has been baptized in the life-blood of more than fifty mem already."

"But that's a lie, captain, there's not a word of truth in it!" excclaimed Harry.

"God almighty now! But I don't know about that. But come, I will show you where to bunk. We are rather crowded this trip and I'll have to stow you away in my cabin. There are two of us, but we'll divide with you;" and leading the way into the cabin, he showed them a bunk and said: "Rather close quarters, but's the best we can do. Your wife is small, so she won't take up much room anyway."

"O Harry," cried Tom, reproachfully, "what did you mean by telling him such a story?"

"I did it so I wouldn't have to tell your name, Tom, that's all—"

"But he knows me, Harry, besides you might as well have lied about one as the other," declared Tom.

"Well, it's done and can't be helped, so we'll just have to make the best of it, Tom. Come, you are tired, lie down and go to sleep and think nothing more of it," coaxed Harry.

"I won't do it!" declared Tom.

"Nonsense, Tom; I didn't think that we'd get into such a scrape as this—but what is to be, will be, and we can't help it. So think nothing more of it—"

"I won't—I don't want to just the same. If you hadn't told him I was your wife—"

"But what difference does it make, Tom? Are you afraid to trust me, Tom? If you are, just say so like an honest girl."

"O Harry, I didn't mean that—I ain't afraid of you —I never thought of such a thing!" declared Tom, whose feelings were wounded at such a reflection, and removing her coat and shoes, she crawled into the bunk and lay down in silence.

"Well, I didn't think that you were afraid," remarked Harry, spreading a blanket over her; "but you are angry just the same. But never mind, Tom, go to sleep and think nothing more about it. If I had a known—but how did he know you anyway, Tom?"

"Oh, he has heard about us, I suppose."

"Blast his old eyes, anyway," muttered Harry, seating himself upon the foot of the bunk and thinking of the old captain's words, and the strange agitation and

uneasiness which he seemed to entertain on account of his new passenger and the mystery which he believed hung about that mystery stone—the "Star of Kimberly."

"I don't know about that old fellow," mused Harry, "but I will watch him a little and see what—ah, here he comes now"; and lying back across the foot of the bunk, he pretended to be asleep as the captain entered, and pausing before the sleeping pair, the old sea-captain muttered:

"God almighty now! There's no doubt about that gal—she answers the description to a 'T'—yes, it's old Winterstine's darter. Blast my old eyes, but I wish she was away from here. God almighty now! I don't believe thei're married at all, for he wouldn't choose such an uncomfortable place as that to sleep when there's plenty of room in there with her." And rubbing his bald pate, the captain paced back and forth a few times, and then again paused in his walk and muttered:

"God almighty now! I don't believe that there's anything in these superstitious notions—it's all nonsense. But somehow there's been something wrong ever since they come aboard us. There's something a-wind among the men, an' they do say that the rats have all left the ship—a sure sign of disaster. Not a sign of a rat has been seen or heard to-day—God almighty now!"

This is an old saying, but as to its truthfulness I cannot say, nor whether it be merely a superstitious fancy; but it is said that the rats will always leave a vessel just before she sets out upon a passage in which she will be lost. Perhaps not all sailors believe it, but Captain

Marlin and his ship's crew were not an exception to the general rule.

"God almighty now!" muttered the captain, "I do wonder if there's anything in that sign?" Blast my headlights! but I've sailed the seas for on to forty years, and the rats are the only living things that have stood by me all that time. Not a day, not an hour in all those forty years has my vessel been free from the pesky varmints till this day. God almighty now, I wonder if there's anything in it—"

"Cap'n, Cap'n Marlin!" called the mate, entering the cabin hastily. "Cap'n, there's a storm coming directly off the coast and I believe it's going to be a bad one—"

"God almighty now!" exclaimed the captain. "Pipe all hands on deck, close reef the canvass, and make everything snug! God almighty now! I wonder what it means, anyway?" he muttered as he left the state-room.

"Harry, Harry!" cried Tom, awakened by the tumult. "Harry where are you?"

"Here, Tom."

"What are you sitting there for, Harry? Why didn't you lie down here? For shame, Harry, you are angry at me!" said Tom, reproachfully.

"No, no, Tom, it's not that—I'll tell you some other time. Come now, get up—the deuce is to pay—"

"Oh Harry! what do you mean, what's the matter, what's all that noice about?" cried the girl.

"We are going to have a storm. Here, stand up and hold up your arms while I buckle this thing around you," said Harry.

And hastily he buckled a life-preserver around her slender form.

"It don't fit!" complained Tom, twisting herself around uneasily.

"You ain't used to this kind of—of—what do you call 'em?"

"Oh, never mind—fix me quick. O dear! I can't stand that; it's too tight—it hurts—I ain't got room to breathe!"

"Never mind the fit, Tom; it wasn't made for comfort nor—"

"Oh!" cried Tom, as a shock, which nearly threw them off their feet, followed by a grating, jarring sensation, was felt. "O Harry, what is it?"

"Good Heavens," cried Harry, we are going a-ground!"

Just then, clear and loud above the roar of the tempest, rang out the awful cry—"Lost, lost!"

"Here, Tom," cried Harry, seizing a rope and drawing it through Tom's life-preserver and making it fast, "stand up close to me."

Then passing the rope through his own life-preserver, he bound her close to him.

"There, Tom," he said, "we will live or die together—we are united for life and none, save God, can put us asunder. Tom, are you afraid?"

"No, Harry," she answered, "I am not afraid."

"Come, then—"

Just then came that awful cry again—"Lost, lost!"

Panic-stricken, the crew now began rushing about in wild dismay. Some praying, some crying, some cursing

and swearing, while others remained in awe-stricken silence.

"Look, look—O God!" cried Tom, pointing directly ahead, at the dark outlines of a huge pile of rocks which rose high aad indistinct in the darkness.

"God Almighty, now!" came in the stentorian tones of old Captain Marlin.

"Quick, Tom, hold your breath and hang to me!" cried Harry, seizing the girl in his arms and running quickly to the side of the vessel.

"Oh Harry!" wailed poor little Tom; and the next moment the mad sea-waves reached out their demon arms, and, in that awful, close and deadly embrace, bore them away.

In half an hour the storm had passed and all was peace and quiet, and the next morning a passing steamer noted the wreckage on the rocky shore and hove to to investigate. Not a living soul was found among all that ill-fated ship's crew.

The ship had struck upon the rocky shore of a small islet and within sight of land; but inquiry convinced them that all had perished.

The proud ship which had sailed the stormy seas for many years and weathered many storms, had gone down.

———:o:———

CHAPTER XX.

TO-MORROW..

Two months had passed, and still no news, not even a word had reached the anxious, and now almost despairing inmates at Aunt Jane's.

Two long, dreary months of anxiety, of uncertainty, of dread; still not a word of any kind of the missing had come to dispel the uncertainty—that would at once and for all settle to a certainty the fate of little Tom and her lover.

The two old men who had lived, for seventeen years, such bitter enemies, had become firm and inseperable friends. Both equally loved little Tom and brave, young Harry, and were inconsolable at the loss of them. Though James Winterstine had three other daughters, one of which was still at home, not one of them would fill the place left vacant by the absence of little Tom—his boy, as he called her. While to the old hermit, she had come like a ray of sunshine, bursting through the darkness of night, and dispelling the gloom which had hovered about his lonely old heart for so many years. Bringing, as she did, a feeling of peace and hope to his weary heart, comfort and rest to his old age. For he had, since his first meeting with little Tom and Harry, whom he had since learned, was his own son, laid plans for the future—plans which would have made her the happy mistress of a peaceful and



THE OLD HERMIT, KNEELING DOWN BESIDE THE GRIEF-STRICKEN FATHER, PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD YET RESTORE THEIR CHILDREN. P. 157.

and happy home, where he, as the father of young Harry—her husband—could pass the remainder of his days in peace and comfort, made his loss doubly severe.

Two months had passed, and not a word concerning the fate of the *children* had come. Everything that they could do had been done.

Two months since the day that happy, light-hearted little Tom and her lover had rode away upon that fateful excursion to the mountains had passed and, before the fire that had blazed so cheerily upon the hearth upon this memorable evening, sat the two old, sorrowing friends—James Winterstine and Henry Lovell.

Aunt Jane sat in her corner, knitting, while Lucy was deeply absorbed in the soul-harrowing tragedy of the latest French novel.

Suddenly the sound of hasty footsteps was heard, then came a loud knock at the door and, without waiting for an invitation, the door was pushed open and the visitor entered, and stood before the inmates.

"They are coming!" he cried, excitedly. "They left Port Orange three days ago on the ship Cape Town. She will reach the Cape to-day and to-morrow they will be here." Heartily, almost incoherently, he delivered his message.

No answer was expected, so the messenger boy, bowing low, took his departure.

The father's head drooped a little lower, while tears of joy coursed down his furrowed cheeks; yet he spoke not a word.

Aunt Jane's knitting dropped from her trembling

fingers, while Lucy's French novel closed with a low, rustling sound and dropped listlessly upon her lap.

The old hermit, rising slowly from his chair and kneeling before the weeping father, raised his trembling voice to God in thanksgiving for the good news, that the children still lived, and would soon be home.

"To-morrow they will be here. O, thank God, thank God!" sighed the father.

"But," says the philosopher, "to-morrow is a day that never comes."

The morrow dawned bright and beautiful. It was a fitting day for the home-coming of the long lost wanderers, but they did not come. The long day came to to a close and, with evening, came a message.

The two old men were sitting before the fire; Aunt Jane was in her corner, but she was not knitting; Lucy was in her accustomed place, but the French novel was lying upon the table, untouched; when, again, as upon the previous evening, a loud knock upon the door startled them and, as before, without waiting an answer to his summons, the messenger entered.

For a moment, and as though the sad news which the messenger brought, had cast its shadows before, a hushed and almost breathless silence pervaded the room. All seemed to feel, in that brief, silent period, that the weight of some terrible sorrow was about to fall upon them.

At last, and in a voice that trembled with emotion, the messenger said—

"Mr. Winterstine, I have been sent to bring you the sad news that the ship upon which Miss Winterstine and

Mr. Lovejoy took passage, was lost. I—ahem—I—I received the telegram to-night—not a soul was saved—all went down. She struck on the rocks and went down in deep water. Some natives upon the island saw her when she struck, and some thirty or more bodies were found the next morning by a passing steamer, but not a living person was left to tell the tale," said the messenger, and with bowed head he turned and left the room.

For half an hour, not a word was spoken. The grief-stricken father sank back in his chair; his hoary head drooped upon his bosom, but not a word did he utter.

Aunt Jane had followed Lucy's example and retired to her own room.

Again the old hermit arose slowly and kneeling down beside the grief-stricken father, prayed that God would yet restore their children to them.

The days dragged their weary lengths along till a month had passed since the sad news had first reached them, yet the first news, that not a soul had survived to tell the tale of that ill-fated ship and her doomed crew and passengers, remained undisputed. She had struck upon the rocks in that awful tempest and gone down with all on board.

They had heard the story of their appearance at Port Orange and the tragical meeting of Harry and the Boar. They had left the same day, scarcely four hours after entering the town, upon the ill-fated ship, Cape Town. That was the last seen of the ship and her freight of human beings.

CHAPTER XXI.

ADRIFT ON THE OCEAN.

Down beneath the seething, rushing billows the unfortunate lovers were dragged by the demon-arms of the angry sea. But Harry Lovejoy was not one to despair; but, struggling with all his giant strength, he finally gained the surface of the mad waters.

"Tom, Tom," he cried, with his lips close to her ear, "speak, Tom, are you hurt?"

"No, no," she answered feebly, half chocked by the salt-water, "I think not, Harry; are you?"

"No, I am all right. Cling close to me, so I can have my hands free, and keep your head above water," he said.

"O Harry! what do you suppose has happened to all those people? Do you think they are all drowned?"

"I don't know, Tom, perhaps some of them will escape."

"Oh, isn't it awful Harry? There were over fifty people aboard altogether. But what do you think, Harry, is there any hope for us?" asked Tom,

"Yes, yes, of course there is, Tom. I was shipwrecked here at this same place less than a year ago, and drifted away to sea just as we are drifting now, and I escaped, you see."

"Yes, but we may not be so fortunate this time, Harry."



"IT LOOKS LIKE A BOAT, TOM; LET'S SWIM TO IT." P. 161.

"Well, what is to be will be, and there's no help for it. Everything is right and all for the best, if we could only understand it, Tom."

"I don't know about that, Harry; I would rather be at home now than here; wouldn't you?"

"Well, yes, I rather think I would, but fate decreed that we should be here and under the very conditions that we are in, and so we are here. There is no dodging it, Tom, we will have to accept our fate as it comes, be it life or death. If we are to die, we will die; and if we are to live, we will live in spite of all creation. Nothing can change our fate. A man's life is given him, with all the ups and downs included, and he must live it."

"Don't you believe that any one can die or be killed before the natural end of their life?"

"No, I don't."

"You believe that every one has a fixed time to live, and they must live that long, and no longer?"

"Yes, I do."

"You are a fatalist, you don't believe in any such thing as chance?"

"No, I don't believe in any such thing as chance. What is to be, will be."

"And is that why you never give up or get discouraged, or why you are never afraid?" asked Tom.

"It may be," he answered.

"Then you think that our fate is already settled and nothing can change it?"

"Nothing can change it, Tom."

"Not even God? Don't you believe that God will hear

our prayers and will answer them? Don't you believe it does any good to pray?"

"I don't know, Tom, just what I believe about that. I have heard people pray—I have heard you pray, Tom, and I believe if God would hear and answer anyone's prayers, He would yours; but whether those prayers were heard or answered, I can't say. I believe, Tom, that that ship we sailed on was fated to go down—that was to be her last trip. I don't believe that any amount of prayers could have saved her. God knew what was best and He had written her destiny. If there was as many as one person on board whose alotted time had not arrived, that person, I believe, would escape."

"Oh, I don't know, Harry. I don't believe that so many people could be brought together by mere chance that were all destined to die at the same time."

"I don't believe in chance, Tom; besides they may not all die—some may be spared. We are not dead yet."

"We have a very good prospect of being dead before long though," said Tom.

"I don't think so. I wouldn't take a considerable for our chances yet. That makes me think, Tom—what did you do with that diamond of yours?" asked Harry.

"Don't mention it, Harry!" cried Tom with a shudder. "Oh, I hope we are rid of it."

"But what did you do with it?"

"I dropped it in my bunk when I got up," she answered.

Thus drifting away to sea, Harry sought to cheer and

encourage his little companion by idle talk and encouraging words.

On, on, they drifted. The storm had passed and the stars came out in all their splendor. Beautiful indeed was the night fast drawing to a close. Already, the gray dawn of morning began to light up the eastern sky.

On, on the swift current bore the helpless victims. The sun, like a great, red ball of fire, was just peeping above the water-bound horizon when, off to the right of them, the dim outlines of some small, dark object was seen.

"Look, look, Harry," cried Tom, "what is it?"

"It looks like a boat, Tom; lets swim to it," replied Harry.

In a few moments they were before the object.

"It's Captain Marlin's little yawl," said Harry, as they climbed into the boat; "and it's most full of water, but I guess that we can bale it out."

"There," ejaculated Harry, loosening the rope that bound them closely and firmly together, "that don't release you from your contract, nor me from mine—it don't separate us, we are just the same; it allows us a little more liberty, that's all."

Now to bale out the water. There's a locker in the bow of the boat and there ought to be a bucket there—yes, there is," he said, as he opened the locker and glanced within. "That's luck; now we'll soon have a comfortable place to rest."

In a few minutes the water was baled out and the little

boat with its two occupants danced merrily away over the rippling surface of the great Indian ocean.

Away, away, all day and all night. On, still on, till three days had passed, still no sign of land, nor a sail had appeared to break the dreary monotony of that vast expanse of boundless water, or to cheer and bring a ray of hope to their almost hopeless and desponding hearts.

The day was fast drawing to a close—it had been a day of suffering, of agony both of body and mind, suffering that must be-endured to be understood—suffering that had, at last, conquered little Tom. Strong, brave, indomitable, little Tom, had yielded and for two or three hours had lain in her lover's arms unconscious of her sufferings and of her surroundings.

The sun which had appeared as a great red ball sweeping majestically through the heavens throughout all that long and awful day of suffering, was slowly sinking below the ocean-bound horizon when little Tom, aroused from her unconsciousness, opened her great, wondering eyes and looked up into the agonized face of her lover.

"O Harry," she moaned, "let's go now, let's die and end our suffering. There's no hope for us, Harry. "Take me in your arms and kiss me good-bye, then let us lie down together in the sea. It will be all over in just a little while. They say, Harry, that it don't hurt much to drown."

"Wait till another day, Tom, and then—yes, I will, I will do it, Tom—I will!"

"O Harry, I can't wait—I can't!" moaned the poor girl.

"Perhaps we won't have to, Tom," said Harry, "for there's going to be a storm."

"Tie ourselves together, Harry, so we can't get separated. Let us die in each other's arms—I can die happy then."

"Yes, yes—if we must die, Tom, we will die together," he said; and taking the rope he lashed themselves closely and firmly together. Then lying down in the boat, they awaited the coming of the storm.

The gray and red glare of evening had given way to Egyptian darkness. Not a star, not a visible thing in all that vast expanse of blackness, not even one another could be seen. Not a sound save the low moan of the sea, disturbed that awful, monotonous stillness. It was a silence as of death, a darkness as of eternity.

On swept the coming storm. It was an awful night. Great pillars of clouds came sweeping on across the placid waters toward the little boat with its two helpless occupants, seemingly without a breath of air stirring behind it. On swept the great, black columns, on and above them and resting upon them, came the rushing storm.

"Look, look!" cried the girl in a low, feeble tone, pointing to the rushing tempest towering high above them. For a moment it paused and rested as if to gain renewed strength, renewed fierceness for the awful work which it had to do, seemingly held up by the awful blackness beneath; for a moment only did it hesitate, and then burst forth in all it's demon fury. Flash after flash of long, red tongues of chain-lightning, licking with their firey tongues the lips of the storm, then darted

down into the seething waters. The thunder too, which had been muttering so angrily heretofore, began to crack with all the vengeful, pent-up fury of heavy ordnance. Bowing like the belly of a sail or a huge net, the storm reached out it's terrible arms and circled around and beyond them, folding them in his awful deadly embrace. Then came the mad rush of waters, driven on with the fury of an avalanche, by the whirling fury of wind and rain and catching the little boat, lifted it from the water and hurled it, with the fury of a thousand demons, into the very heart of that awful, hissing, boiling caldron of sea and storm.

"O God!" groaned Harry, as he felt himself and little Tom caught up and hurled from the boat and raised upon the crest of a mighty billow and then, as if caught up in the arms of the storm, they were hurled into space. For one awful moment—though it seemed an age to him—they were borne upon the wings of the tempest—tempest! Oh, what a feeble word!—and then, as if by some kind providence, dropped lightly upon the sloping sands of a small island.

On swept the storm as quickly as it came, and then the stars came out and looked down with pitying eyes upon the pale faces of the two unconscious castaways as they lay bound firmly together, not only by the strong bands of manilla rope, but by the yet still stronger bonds of love.

The storm had passed away and, as if in atonement for the awful havoc which He had wrought, the God of the sea and the storm stretched forth His hand and all nature rested in silent, peaceful repose—silent save for

the low, sad moan of the sea which, in a low, minor key, seemed to sing a requiem to the hopeless, unconscious waifs.

Morning dawned and the bright, warm sun looked down into the pale faces of the waifs. It's warm rays kissed the pale, sweet lips of little Tom, while the soft, sea breeze sweeping over the island stealing sweet perfume from the myriads of tropic flowers, toyed playfully with the wet golden tresses of little Tom and fanned her drenched, sodden garments to dryness and warmth. Again the warm sun slanted his rays across her pale, sweet face and pried gently at her drooping lids. For a moment there was a hesitating quiver, as if yet in doubt, then the lids raised slowly and the great, blue eyes looked wonderingly about for a moment, and then rested upon the pale, death-like face of her lover, whose cold cheek had rested against her own.

"O my God, O my God," she moaned, "he is dead, he is dead!"

O the agony of that poor young heart! Lying there, bound to her unconscious lover with strong ropes and unable to move or to free herself, for every effort only convinced her of her utter helplessness, of her doom, the poor girl murmured:

"Thank God I die in his arms. Poor Harry," she murmured, "O how you have suffered for me. But it is all over now." And nestling close to the cold, still form, poor little Tom cried—cried till sleep or unconsciousness came to her relief.

Again the soft sea-breeze toyed with her golden curls; the warm sun-beams kissed her sweet, pale lips and the sad sea-waves moaned—"Gone—gone—"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SEA CHEATED OF HIS VICTIM.

Slowly the great orb of day wheeled his course heavenward and bent his slanting rays across the sun-lit sea. The birds, gorgeous in their beautiful tints of purple and gold, greeted the new day with their glad songs of joy which filled the air with melody; while a parrot perched upon the swaying branch of a tall tree looked down upon the two strange creatures lying so still, so calm, and gave vent to his disapprobation in loud, shrill screams. Then a hare, hopping nimbly along the sandy beach paused, and for a moment sitting upon his hind feet gazed, with wide, wondering eyes upon the strange pair. A slight movement of one of the strange creatures, and tabby bounced away in fright; the parrot screamed and the birds, startled by the out-cry, ceased their singing.

"Ah," came in a low murmur from the lips of little Tom, as her eyes opened and she looked about her. Again her gaze rested upon the pale face of her lover, but now she saw a change; a slight color had stolen upon his cheeks and lips, and she knew that he lived. Again struggling with all her feeble strength, she managed to raise herself to her knees and whispered—

"O Harry, Harry! can't you speak? Wake up Harry!" she pleaded, shaking him gently.

Again she exerted all her feeble strength—she struggled at the ropes, at the buckles of her life preserver and—O



BUT THE SEA HAD BEEN CHEATED OF HIS VICTIMS. P. 172.

joy! the buckle yielded, and the life-preserver loosened from its fastenings, fell to the ground, and she was free. But oh how faint and dizzy. For a moment, she swayed to and fro and everything seemed to fade from her sight —her head drooped upon her bosom and she fell across the body of her unconscious lover.

For a moment she lay quiet, then she struggled again to her knees and steadying herself with her hands, she looked about her.

"O how beautiful!" she murmured, as her gaze fell upon the landscape—the trees, the flowers and the sweet songs of the birds burst upon her confused hearing. "Oh, there must be water there," she murmured; "yes, yes, I must—I will go!" she cried in desperation as she struggled to her feet; but again everything seemed to fade away from her sight, and she fell.

"O God, help me!" she wailed and again she strove. But this time, creeping upon hands and knees, she finally reached the great rocks beneath the spreading branches of a huge tree, beneath whose mossy sides issued a spring of cool, sparkling water.

With a glad cry, she arose to her feet as she saw the sparkling water, and staggered forward and fell. Her hands touched the water. Ravenously, almost fiercely, she scooped up the cool, life-giving water in her hands and conveyed it to her parched and bleeding mouth.

Again and again her eager, trembling hands carried the life-giving water to her parched lips; but famished and eager, almost crazed as she was, she remembered her unconscious companion.

"O Harry," she moaned, as she looked about her in

the hope of finding something in which she could carry him some water. Almost at the very brink of the shining pool, was a pink and white sea-shell. Eagerly she took it and filling it with the cool water, she crept back to her lover.

"Harry, Harry," she cried joyously, holding the shell above his parched lips and pouring the precious liquid into his mouth.

Again and again she made the trip to the spring and back, bringing the life-giving water and pouring it into the parched and bleeding mouth of the unconscious lover.

At last, completely exhausted, she sank down beside her companion and resting her head upon his bosom, she fell asleep.

Again the gentle, perfumed, sea-breeze toyed with her golden tresses; the slanting sun-beams kissed her sweet, pale lips and the sad sea-waves moaned—"Lost, lost!"

But not long did our little heroine sleep, for the cruel pangs of hunger soon brought her back from dreamland to a consciousness of her real condition.

"O dear! O dear!" she groaned. "I am so hungry. I wonder if I can't find something to eat; some clams, some oysters or some kind of shell fish—there must be something of the kind along the beach. I will go and see"; and creeping slowly along the sandy shore, she soon discovered some clams. Gathering a few, she hastened back to her companion.

"Now," she said, "for a feast." And cracking the shells with a stone, she scooped out a fish and dropped it into Harry's mouth. It disappeared instantly. "Now

me," she said; and tipping her head back, and closing her eyes, she lowered one into her mouth—it went down. "Ugh," she sputtered with a shudder, "I don't like 'em." But like them or not, the operation was continued till a dozen was divided between them, giving two to Harry while she took one herself.

After finishing her feast, she lay down again and was soon fast asleep. Hour after hour passed, and still she slept.

The rising tide creeping slowly up the sandy beach, had almost reached them now. A little wave came in and bathed the feet of the unconscious Harry. The parrot, gorgeous in his coat of flaming red and green, surveyed the scene with a critical eye and, as if in warning to the unconscious strangers, screamed out in his shrill, harsh voice.

"What was that?" cried Tom, rubbing her eyes and sitting up, "I thought I heard some one scream."

Again the parrot screamed.

"Ah, it was you, was it master poll?" she said.

Another wave came rolling in and the spray flew into her face.

"O heavens!" she groaned, "the tide is rising. Harry, Harry! O my God, he will be drowned!"

Fiercely, desperately, she struggled in her vain effort to raise her companion. Little hope indeed was there that she, so weak that she could not stand alone, could raise him, a man of two hundred pounds weight, in her feeble arms.

Higher and higher crept the relentless waters.

Again she put forth all her feeble strength and raising

her companion's head, she rested his cold, pale cheek upon her soft, warm bosom.

On beyond them crept the silent tide. Higher and higher up around them, till the waves bathed her heaving bosom and dashed mercilessly into the face of her precious friend.

"O God, help me now!" she prayed, and again, almost beside herself with the awful fear which seized her heart. she struggled and strove to raise him. The water had come up around and over him and buoyed him up so that she could move him. With a glad cry of joy, she crept toward the shore, holding her lover's head above the water and following the rising tide.

On, on up the sandy beach, upon her knees in the water which came almost to her shoulders, crept the brave, dauntless girl, bearing her precious burden. At last, the tide turned, and with a feeling of inexpressible joy, the little heroine sunk down exhausted and helpless.

The warm sun soon dried their wet garments and brought a feeling of warmth and renewed strength to her wearied limbs. With her returning strength and renewed hope, she set out again in search of food.

Creeping slowly along the sandy shore, following the out-going tide, she succeeded in finding some shell-fish which had been left by the receding waters. Here, too, she found a cocoanut lying where the tide had left it. This was the best of all and, in childish eagerness, she picked it up and hurrid back.

"Harry, Harry," she cried, "see what I have got!" but Harry did not hear her.

Cracking the shell with a stone, she held the milky

juice to his lips. How eagerly he drank. Nearly all she gave him, drinking but a little herself. Then taking out the white, sweet meat, she offered him some; but he could not eat it.

"O Harry," she said sadly, "can't you eat a little?"

But he could not—so weak, so exhausted and, as yet, showing no signs of consciousness, he made no effort to take the proffered food.

"Oh, he's too weak to eat it," she mused. "Ah, I have it," she cried, as a new thought occurred to her; and taking a mouthful, she chewed it up fine, and then, as a mother feeds her babe, she took it from her mouth and put it into his. "Ah, he can eat it that way," and so she fed him as much as she dared.

As night drew on, she lay down beside her companion and nestling closely to keep warm, for the night was quite cool, she slept till nearly morning. The gray of dawn was just appearing when she was aroused by the cold spray from the sea-waves dashing into her face.

Arising quickly, she saw at a glance, the danger that threatened them.

"Oh, if I could only carry him a little farther up the shore, just far enough to keep him out of the water. O I must!" she cried. "The wind is raising and the waves run so high that it will drown us here.

Tugging at him with all her might, she tried to drag him, but she could not do it.

"Harry, Harry!" she cried in her distress; "can't you wake up, darling?"

Slowly his eyes opened and he looked up into her scared, anxious face.

"O Harry," she cried, "the tide is rising and we will be drowned here; can't you help a little?" and again she strove to move him.

He looked anxiously up into her frightened face; his lips moved, but they uttered no sound—he could not speak. He made an effort as if trying to roll himself over, and with such a meaning look in his dark, gray eyes that Tom understood his meaning.

"Oh, I know, I know, Harry, what you mean now," she cried; and so, getting between him and the sea, she rolled him over and over and soon had him safe beyond the reach of the angry waves.

It was a hard task for her weak, little body, and by the time that she had reached a place of safety, she fell exhausted by his side.

But the sea had been cheated of his victims, and little Tom was happy.

Again the bright, warm sun just peeping above the crest of the waves, slanted his warm rays across the fair cheek and kissed the sweet lips, while the sea-breeze tossing the waves into foam, toyed with the golden curls and the sad sea-waves moaned, angrily now—Lost, lost!"





SHE STOOD AND WATCHED HIM TILL HE WAS OUT OF SIGHT. P. 179

CHAPTER XXIII.

TOM KEEPS HER PROMISE.

Safe above the reach of the waves at last, little Tom rested in peace. And so the time passed.

The first few days were days of doubt, of uncertainty; for Harry had received an injury that came near ending his life. But the faithful nursing and loving care of his little companion, finally triumphed over death and restored him to consciousness and hope. Tenderly, constantly, faithfully she nursed him and watched over him, feeding him as a mother would feed a sick child, she nursed him back to life.

Slowly, as the days of suffering passed, he grew stronger. First, with Tom's aid, he was able to sit up, and he could get about a little. But to-day, Tom was happy. Just thirty-five days had passed since the sea and storm had cast them upon their little island home. The day dawned bright and beautiful. It was one of those days when all nature seems to revel in the bountiful blessings of God.

Day after day, since Harry had sufficiently recovered to be able to walk, they had gone to the "look-out"—as they called the highest point upon the island—to fix their signal and to watch in the hope of seeing some passing ship.

Thirty-five days had passed since they were cast ashore upon the little island, still no sign of a sail had appeared.

Every day it had been the same; and to-day, walking arm in arm, they reached the "look-out" and stood for a few moments in silent admiration of the grand and beautiful picture spread out before them.

"O what a beautiful picture!" murmured Tom, looking away across the little island scarcely a half mile in its longest extent, and then glancing away to where the blue arch of the heavens touched the shining sea.

Sitting upon a moss-covered rock, with her dainty little hands folded in her lap; her long, golden hair flowing loosely about her slight, graceful form, gazing so intently, so earnestly across the sea, while a beautifnl light illuminated her fair, young face, her eyes shone with a lustre such as poets are wont to discribe as reflecting the love of a pure and innocent heart; while about her sweet, red lips played a smile which told of the love and happiness that filled her heart, she made a most beautiful picture.

But twice before had Harry seen that same indiscribable look upon her face. Once, the day that they made that fateful excursion to the mountains, when he had told her of his love and asked her to be his wife; and again, when she was sitting by the open window at old Hans Grauerholtz. Harry had asked her then, what she was thinking of, but she had refused to tell him; and to-day as she sat there, that same heavenly expression lit up her face again.

Harry was looking at her—the most beautiful picture, he thought, that he had ever seen.

"Tom," he said, laying his hand gently upon her golden head, "Tom, what are you thinking of?"

"Won't tell you, Harry," she answered, and a tell-tale blush suffused her fair cheek.

"But why won't you tell me, Tom?"

"Oh, sometimes a girls's thoughts are too sacred for a man to know," she replied.

"Well, I am content; your thoughts are your own, Tom, so just continue to think as much and as long as you please," he said.

"I will tell you one thing, Harry, that I was thinking about. I read a story once about two young people that were shipwrecked and cast ashore on a small island where they lived for a long time. I don't know just how long it was that they stayed there before they were taken off, but I think it was about two or three years. I was thinking about them and wondering if we would have to stay here so long as they did there," she said, thoughtfully.

"Tell me about them, Tom," asked Harry.

"No, no," she replied, "I can't do it."

"Why not, Tom?" he asked.

"Oh, just because I—I—that's just what I was—I—I don't want to," she replied with stammering tongue, as blushing she drooped her eyes before his keen, searching gaze.

"Ah, well, perhaps I can guess then what you are thinking of. I think that I have read that same story, or something like it, myself. It was the story of a young lady and gentleman—they were, of course, lovers—and if I remember right, they got married while staying upon the island. Were you thinking of that, Tom?

Were you thinking of it in regard to ourselves in any way?"

But Tom did not answer.

"Tom," said Harry, tenderly, "I wouldn't wrong you for all the world. I love you too well for that—I love you too dearly, too truly to think of such a thing; but Tom, did you ever think how long we may have to stay here, how long it may be before a ship may come here and take us off? We've been here a month—more than a month—we may have to stay here a year, perhaps longer. What shall we do, Tom? Shall we live here as we are now, as we have for the past month, or shall we do as those young people, whom you were thinking of, did? What do you say, Tom? What do you think about it?"

"Oh, I don't know, Harry," she answered. "I never thought of it till to-day. I don't know what to do—I don't know what to think. Give me time—wait a little while I try to think of it."

"You shall have all the time that you want, Tom. I won't urge you, but if you will keep your promise with me, Tom, I will be the happiest man in all the world. Do you remember, Tom, the day that we went up into the mountains—the day that you promised to be my wife? It was just four months ago to-morrow and we were to be married upon your birthday, the sixth of April—to-day is the fifth. Tom, to-morrow was to be our wedding day—will you keep your promise with me."

"O Harry, please don't ask me to answer now! We didn't expect this—if nothing had happened—"

"If nothing had happened, Tom, to-morrow you

would be my wife. This is the fifth of April, to-morrow is the sixth and is your birthday—was to be your wedding day too. Tom, will you keep your promise?" he pleaded earnestly.

"Oh, I don't know—I don't know what to do! I want to do right, God knows I want to do what is right! I wouldn't do it, Harry, if I thought it would be wrong. No, no, as dearly and as truly as I want to be your wife, I couldn't do it if I thought it would be wrong. Tell me, Harry, just what you think, for you understand better than I. Tell me, would it be wrong? And what would the people think of us? Tell me honestly, truly, Harry, for I know that you won't take advantage of me, a poor, helpless, little girl that loves and trusts you."

"Tom, as I live—thanks to your loving, faithful care in nursing me when I was sick, in bringing me back to life; and as I hope to live to make you happy and be happy myself, as I will be with you forever my little wife, I wouldn't wrong you, Tom. I don't believe that it would be wrong—how could it? Why should it be? We may have to stay here for a year, perhaps longer. Then again, a ship may come along to-morrow—we can't tell."

"Let me go away all alone by myself and think about it—I will tell you when I come back," she said.

"Oh, I hope some little fairy will whisper a word for me," pleaded Harry, as the girl turned away and left him.

In the course of half an hour, Tom came back, and walking straight up to Harry, her face radiant with smiles and blushes, her eyes beaming with the love-light

of a pure, young heart, she placed her little hands in his broad palms and said in her low, sweet voice:

"Harry, I will keep my promise—I will be your wife. Kiss me, Harry, and tell me that I am doing right."

"So help me God, Tom, I believe that you are doing right," said Harry, earnestly.

To-morrow! O how short a time! And yet much can be done in one short day—enough, even to change the destiny of a lifetime; enough to make or mar the happiness of a whole life.

To-morrow! Ah, little need had they for time in which to prepare; for, what had they to do?

Simply nothing but wait the coming of the happy time —nothing, nothing but wait. No bridal costume, no preparations, no invitations.

Ah, I forgot, there was one thing that they had to do. For several days past they had been engaged in building a new house—a very simple affair to be sure, still it had kept them busy for several days and yet it was not quite completed.

"We will finish our house," said Harry; and they went to work with light hearts to complete their task. There was but little to do and the day passed quickly by.

The next morning, bright and early, Harry was astir; and after finishing their breakfast, he took Tom's little hands and looking down into her happy, sparkling eyes, said:

"Tom, this is our wedding day and I am going to leave you alone to-day. We have hardly been out of sight of each other since we came here and I am going to leave you all alone to-day. I am going down to the

other end of the island and won't be back till about sunset, so good-bye, Tom."

"Good-bye!" she answered, and stood and watched him till he was out of sight.

"Ah," she mused, "there's one thing that I can do to prepare myself for your return, Harry. My clothes—Oh, they are so ragged and dirty—yes, yes, I will go down to the cove and wash my clothes and bathe—yes, I can be clean at any rate."

As the day was warm and pleasant, the task was both light and pleasant.

"There!" she exclaimed, after dressing, "I feel almost like a new girl; but O what a long day. I am so lonely —I wish Harry would come back. I never thought that I would miss him so much," she said, as she returned to her little house and busied herself with decorating the cosy little nest with shells and flowers.

The time passed quickly now, and almost before she thought of it, a light footstep sounded at the door and Harry's voice saying—

"Tom, may I come in?"

"No, no," she said, meeting him at the door with a welcome kiss. "Wait, Harry, till we—till—"

"All right, Tom," he laughed gayly, "I will wait *till* —for it won't be very long—not very.

"Come, are you ready?" he asked.

"Yes, I am ready," she murmured, taking his arm and allowing him to lead her away. Ah, how many have been led away—some to happiness and content, some to misery and woe; but I doubt if there are many that have or will be led away with a lighter heart, with purer

hope—hopes, too, that in after years were fully realized. Away, on up the steep side of the cliff he led her, till they reached the "lookout" where, for so many long, weary days little Tom had watched and waited for the ship that never came. But to-day they were going there for another purpose.

Happy little Tom! Never had a happier girl been led to the altar; never in a girl's bosom had awakened a purer, a nobler love than her's.

Smiling and blushing through her tears, she stood before her lover upon the "lookout," the happiest girl, she verily believed, in all the world.

"Tom," said Harry, "do you regret this?"

"No, Harry," she replied, "I do not."

"But those tears, Tom; why do you cry—why those tears?"

"It's nothing, Harry, believe me, I am happy. I don't regret the step I have taken. But tell me once more, Harry, that I am not doing wrong."

"You are not doing wrong—you can't do wrong in this. If I sin in leading you to this, then may punishment be upon me, but I believe that we are doing no wrong. May God deal with me as I do by you."

"Thank you, Harry, I ask no more."

"Ask what you will, little Tom—I will promise you anything you ask."

"Only this, Harry," she said, as she placed both her little hands in his and looked up into his kind, honest face. "Only this: that you will do by me as I do by you. Love me as a husband should love his wife, and in return I give you my poor little self. Take me to your

heart and let me live there always, and I will be the happiest girl in all the world."

"God is my witness, Tom, our vows are recorded in heaven, and God help me and you—they shall never be broken!"

"Never!" repeated Tom, "so long as I live, God help me. Kiss me now—your little wife—and take me home."

Happy, happy Tom!

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CHAPTER XXIV.

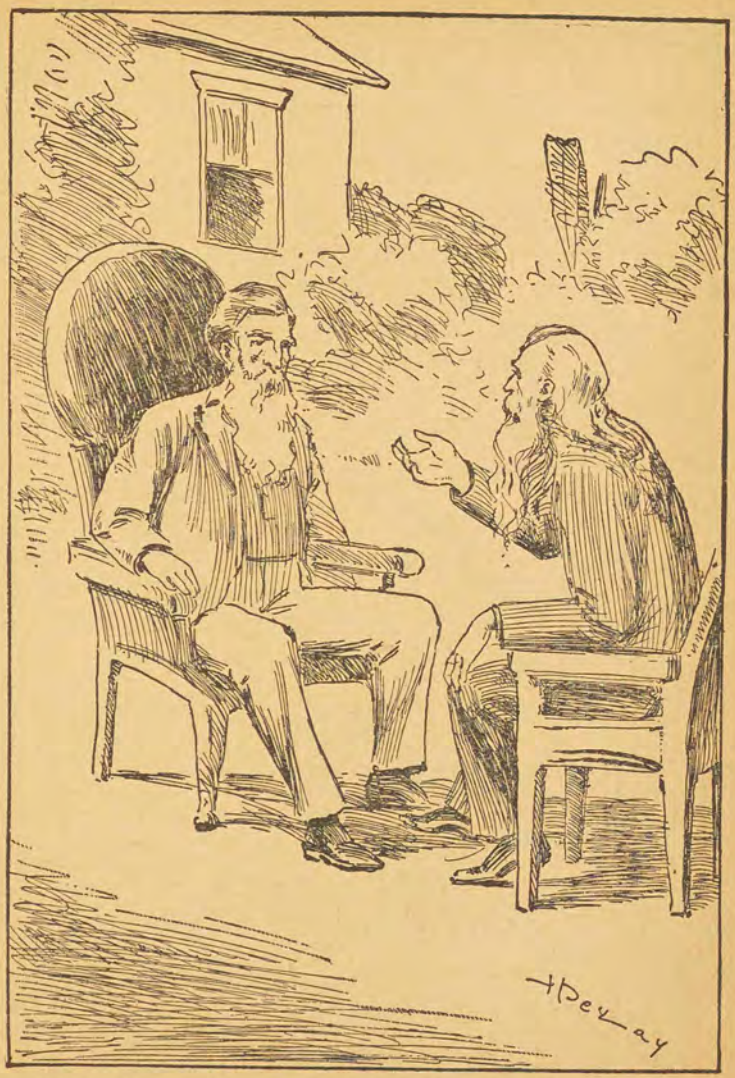
AT CLIFFSIDE.

The summer had passed and the cool days of autumn had come, bringing with it the golden fruit and painting leaf and blade in the rich, beautiful tints of gold and brown. It was one of those warm, pleasant autumn times—such as in New England we call Indian summer—and all Kimberly and the country round about were rejoicing at this, the close of a very bountiful and prosperous season.

It was a beautiful May morning, the sixth of May, which by the way is fall of the year at Kimberly, and James Winterstine and the old hermit were sitting upon the sunny side of the old cottage home at Cliffside which, since the death of Loffden, had been restored to its original owner.

Here, let me say, that all the vast estate of Silas Loffden which originally belonged to James Winterstine and Henry Lovell who first settled upon the land, but which, by some means or other not particularly of interest here, had passed into possession of old Silas Loffden and descended to his son, was restored to the rightful owners and they had returned to the old homestead at Cliffside.

The two old men bent with age and now stricken with the awful sorrow which the loss of little Tom and her lover had cast about their hearts, had been talking of their lost children.



"THE HAPPY DREAM OF MY OLD AGE HAS BEEN BLASTED." P. 183

"James," said the old hermit in a tone of melancholy sadness, "the happy dream of my old age has been blasted; my hopes, my prayers, are alike of no avail—all, all are vain. I have hoped and prayed that our children—I must call them so, for indeed, they are our children—would yet return to gladden and cheer our hearts and home in our last days. With you, it is not so bad for you have other children, but for me there is no hope—life is but a burden. Five months have passed since the children went away, perhaps, O God, I fear, never to return. James, if I were a few years younger, I would solve the mystery of their fate. I feel that some awful tragedy has been enacted—the disappearance of Loffden, the story of 'The Star of Kimberly,' the finding of that great diamond, the 'Devil's Eye,' which passed through so many scenes of blood and murder twenty-five years ago (for it was the same stone that I and my five companions found and lost, and which was lost up there in the mountains by the robbers), and the bloody tale told by the Kafir's, all point to a dark and bloody tragedy. No, I don't believe that they were lost on the 'Cape Town.' I don't believe the story of old Hans Grauerholtz—"

"But surely, Henry," interrupted James Winterstine, "old Hans could have no object in deceiving us—"

"No object!" exclaimed the hermit. "Ah, indeed, I am not so sure of that. Why is it, James, that their names does not appear upon the list of passengers which was recovered from the wreck? Yes, I know that Hans says that they went aboard just as the ship was

ready to sail—perhaps they did, yes, perhaps that it may be true. There was a man killed there at old Hans', and they say that Harry did it. There is something strange about that, for Harry is not a man that would take another's life unless he was forced to do it. Why was he forced to take that man's life? Could it be that he did it in defense of his own? The people of Port Orange knew the story of 'The Star of Kimberly," they had heard from the Kafirs the stories of the bloody struggles for the possession of it; and they had heard, too, of the finding of that stone which some believe to be 'The Star of Kimberly,' while others believe that it's Tom and not the stone that bears that name—so old Hans says, and he confesses that the people believed that the children had the diamond with them—no I don't believe, I can't believe that the children perished on board the Cape Town."

"I am afraid, Henry, that it is all but too true," said the other. "If they had survived, we would have heard from them before now."

"It may be, it may be! Perhaps they were murdered on board the ship and then she was run onto the rocks and destroyed in order to cover up the crime—"

"No, no! I knew Captain Marlin; he was an honest man—"

"Who is that, James?" asked Aunt Jane from the door, interrupting the conversation. "There are two of them, they are coming down through the meadow—a man and a boy."

Both old men looked attentively at the advancing couple.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Aunt Jane, rubbing her eyes in a vain endeavor to clear their sight. "Dear me! I have seen that man before. I—"

"Ahem, I wonder—I—" but the old hermit did not finish the sentence, for somehow his tongue refused to articulate—cleaved to the roof of his mouth; his eyes grew suddenly dim and he was obliged to cling to the veranda post in order to support himself and prevent his falling.

"Lord-a-massy!" ejaculated Aunt Jane, adjusting and re-adjusting her spectacles; then pushing them up upon her forehead, she looked again. "Lord-a-massy! I do believe—"and adjusting her spectacles, after wiping them with her bandana, she took another look.

"Did you ever!" cried Lucy, appearing upon the scene.

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CHAPTER XXV.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

"O Harry! look, look!"

These exclamations, loud and clear, and uttered in a tone of mingled joy and doubt, rang out upon the still morning air of the little island home, and the very next morning after the happy union witnessed upon the "look-out" only a few short hours before.

"Look, look, Harry, it's a vessel!" cried little Tom, who, with her golden head thrust half-way out of the door to their little nest, had spied the white sails of a small vessel not a half mile away, which was headed directly toward the island. In an instant, Harry was beside her and together they stood and watched the approaching vessel till she came to anchor and sent a boat ashore.

Going down to the water's edge, the two castaways stood and welcomed the approaching boat with hearts bounding with joy and thankfulness.

"Oh, if we could have known, if we had waited another day," muttered Tom, and a warm blush mantled her fair cheek; "but then, we didn't know—"

"Are you sorry, Tom?" asked Harry.

"No, no," she replied quickly; "not sorry, Harry, but I was just thinking—"

"Thinking of what, Tom?"

"Won't tell you, Harry," she replied, turning away to



CASTAWAYS WELCOMED THE APPROACHING BOAT. P. 186.

hide her blushing face from the men who had just sprang ashore and were approaching them.

A few minutes later, Tom, with tears in her eyes, looked back and bade good-bye to her little home—that cosy, little nest where she had been so happy—O so happy!

"Never mind, Tom," said Harry, observing her tears, "we will come back some day and pay a visit to our little home. Come," he said, as they reached the ship, "climb up"; and following her, they soon found themselves on the deck.

"God almighty now!" were the first words which greeted them as they stepped upon the deck.

"Captain Marlin!" exclaimed Harry, stepping forward and grasping the hand of the old sea captain. "Then we are not the only survivors of the Cape Town—glad to meet you, captain!" cried Harry, wringing his hands—"glad to see that you escaped; but the rest, captain—what of them?"

"God almighty!" he sputtered, polishing his bald pate. "God almighty, now, but I thought I was the only one left! Glad to see you—blast my eyes but I am! And he grasped the hand of little Tom.

Congratulating one another upon their fortunate and narrow escape, they seated themselves upon a bench and talked long and earnestly of the ill-fated ship and her unfortunate crew.

"I was picked up along toward evening, the next day," said Captain Marlin, "and taken to Australia. I am on my way home now."

The day was very pleasant and rather calm, and as a

a consequence they made rather slow progress; but along toward evening the wind rose and everything promised a safe and speedy arrival at the Cape. But alas! how often is the warm sunshine, the most beautiful and most pleasant day followed by the darkest and bitterest of storms; how often the most flattering promises terminate in deep and bitter woe.

Standing beside her husband, with her hand resting upon his shoulder as he sat talking with the captain, little Tom was looking away across the sea when she spied a little white spec, no bigger it appeared than her hand. But watching it, she saw that it was steadily increasing in size, and she asked:

"Isn't that a vessel?"

All eyes were turned upon the object and all pronounced it a vessel. But there was nothing uncommon about that, and so no further attention was paid to it.

"Harry," whispered Tom, after a little, "isn't that a queer looking vessel?"

Harry, as well as the other, arose and scanned the vessel closely. She was heading in such a way as would put herself directly in the course of the ship and seemed to be crowding on all the canvas they could find room for.

"She carries a deal of cloth," said one.

"A perfect cloud of canvas," suggested another.

"Mighty low down in the water," ventured a third.

"Blast my old head-lights!" bawled old Captain Marlin, after surveying the suspicious looking craft through a glass. "God almighty, now!"

"Give her a wide berth," commanded the captain. "She seems determined to run us down."

"And in a few minutes, obeying orders, the seamen had crowded on every available inch of canvas that could be used.

"We'll show them a clean pair of heels at any rate," declared the captain.

Bearing directly down upon them now, came the stranger.

"God almighty, now!" bawled Captain Marlin, while exclamations of dismay arose from the crew upon every hand; for, at that instant, a black flag with grinning skull and cross-bones was displayed at the mast-head, which quickly and decisively banished all doubt from the minds of the anxious, waiting seamen as to the real character of the strange vessel.

"It's a Malay Pirate!" ran breathlessly from mouth to mouth.

"God almighty, now!" came in a subdued tone from Captain Marlin, as with eyes fairly starting from their sockets, he peered over the bulwarks and watched the pursuing vessel.

Now, it could be seen that the decks were litterally swarming with men, for they no longer tried to conceal their true character. Guns, which had heretofore been masked, were displayed and it was plainly seen that all preparations necessary for action were made.

"Pipe all hands on deck," commanded the captain. "Clear up and prepare for action. We must meet them like men or die like dogs, for the Malay Pirate spares

neither age nor sex. Make everything snug and distribute the arms," commanded the officer.

His orders were soon given and for a while the men rushed quickly about and soon all was ready for battle.

On, on flew the gallant ship. On, on came the fleet pirate.

It was an exciting race, and was made doubly exciting by the fact that the two vessels were evenly matched in speed—so nearly matched that after an hour's race no perceptible difference in distance could be detected between them.

On flew the pursued and pursuer.

But now there was a new hope awakened in the hearts of the anxious, expectant seamen—if they could hold their own until dark, they could make good their escape.

Again the spirits of the men rose. But even so, when our spirits are lightest, when our hopes are brightest, darker gathers the storm clouds about us; so now, for at this time a cloud of white smoke arose from the bows of the pursuer and, an instant later, a solid shot went whizzing through the sails.

Again and again that puff of smoke was followed by the whiz of a shot through the sails and rigging.

Then came a puff followed by a fearful crash, and the main mast toppled for an instant, then fell crashing upon the lee deck.

"God almighty, now!" bawled Captain Marlin.

"Clear the wreck!" commanded the ship's captain.

Quickly, the wreckage was cleared away. But now, it was too plainly evident that escape was utterly impossible—to fight was the only alternative. Every man

was fully determined to sell his life dearly, to fight to the bitter end, for they expected no quarter—the Malay Pirate asks no mercy, neither will he give any.

On they came, swiftly now, bearing down upon the crippled ship with the speed of the wind. Sweeping down in a wide circle like an eagle upon his prey, the Pirate dashed along-side and grappled with the ship.

Every man was waiting—anxiously, impatiently waiting for the bloody fray. Crouching behind the bulwarks, grasping their weapons, every nerve strained to it's utmost, every fiber vibrating beneath the intense tension, they awaited the word of command. It came—low, yet distinct. Instantly a line of grim faces appeared above the bulwarks and a line of red fire crept from the muzzles of fifty muskets.

For a moment the surging mass of blood-thirsty demons wavered before that withering fire, then with wild, fierce yells they rushed impetuously to the attack. But they met a determined resistance and soon the white, polished deck of the merchantman was wreaking with blood and strewn with ghastly corpses. With the horrible yells and curses, the screams of the dying, the incessant popping of pistols and clash of cutlass and sabre, the polished deck of the proud ship which, but a few hours before had been the scene of such peace and good-will, was turned into a veritable hell.

Fiercely the contest raged, though hopeless indeed appeared the fate of the brave, hardy seamen, for outnumbered as they were, the now almost victorious pirates had gained possession of the deck; but now, a change

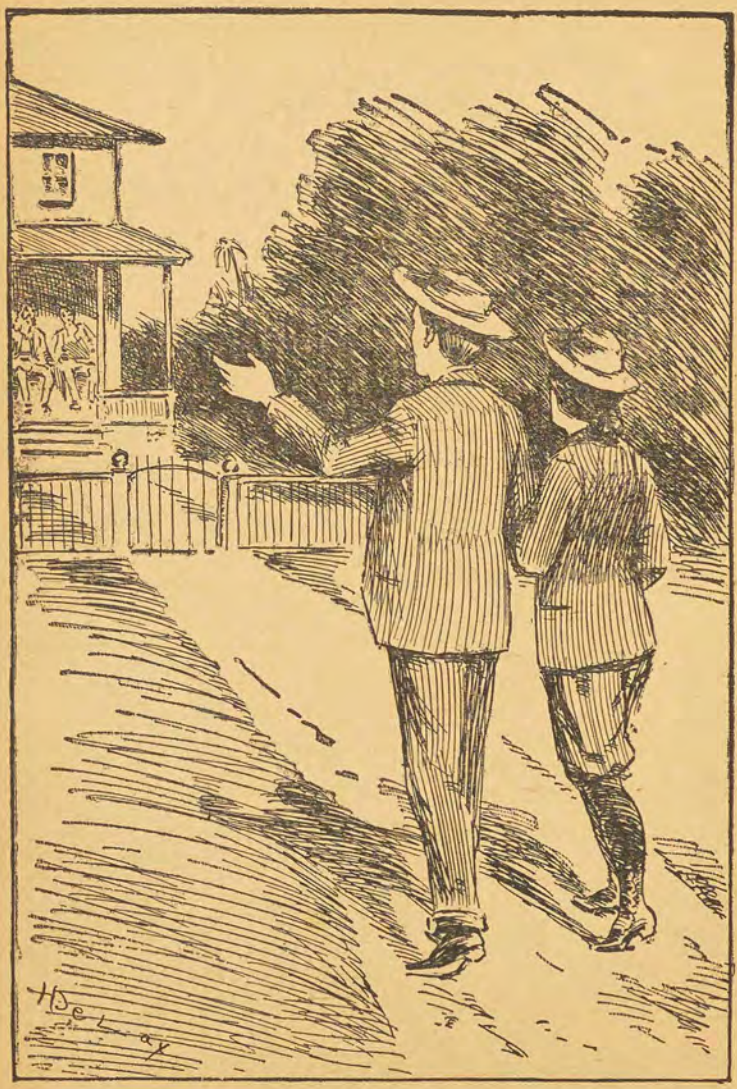
came over the scene, for away to the northeast a black cloud of smoke was first noticed by little Tom.

"Look, look!" she cried, pointing it out "O it is a steamship! Thank God, we are saved!"

For a moment all eyes were turned in the direction of the approaching steamer; then, as if by some magic spell, the pirates vanished, leaving their dead and wounded behind and were soon speeding swiftly away.

Now, came the work of clearing the decks. The dead found a resting place in the sea and the wounded were placed on board the steamship, which proved to be an English cruiser; and, after a little indicision, the ship was abandoned as hopelessly wrecked and the survivors were transferred to the cruiser and taken to Calcutta.

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THEY SAW THE TWO OLD MEN ON THE VERANDA. P. 193.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOME AGAIN.

From Calcutta our two young friends took passage for Cape Town, where they arrived about a month after leaving their island home, and immediately set out for Kimberly.

On arriving at Kimberly, they learned that their parents had regained possession of Cliffside and were then living there; so they set out across the country, and following the path from the spring where Harry had first met little Tom, they passed down through the meadow toward the house.

It was a lovely evening, and as they drew near they saw the two old men sitting upon the veranda watching their approach.

Aunt Jane, who had come down to live with them, had just appeared at the door, and a moment later Lucy appeared also.

"Lord-a-massy!" exclaimed Aunt Jane, holding up her hands in surprise and wonder. "Lord-a-massy!" and she sunk into a chair, gasping: "It's Tom and Harry!"

"Did you ever!" cried Lucy in shocked surprise at the appearance of little Tom dressed in boys clothes and appearing so easy and unconcerned in the presence of the young man by her side, as if perfectly unconscious of his presence or blissfully ignorant of her unlady-like costume.

They were coming up the walk now, and a moment

more little Tom sprang upon the veranda and with a cry joy clasped her trembling father in her arms.

"O papa, papa!" she cried, "don't you know me? It is I, little Tom—your own little Tom!"

* * * * *

The happy meeting was over and the long story of their adventures, their hardships and suffering was told by our little heroine; and then she told of their life upon the island, their marriage and their final escape and return home.

"It was only the next morning after we were married, that we saw a sail heading directly toward the island. She came down within a half mile and then sent a boat ashore. You can imagine they were surprised to find the island inhabited."

"They took us aboard and we set out for the Cape, but were run down by a Malay Pirate, and but for an English cruiser that happened to hear the firing and came down to see what was the matter, they would have sent us to the bottom of the Indian ocean instead of Cape Town. The cruiser was on her way to Calcutta, and so took us there. But we are here at last; and O papa! I am so glad to be home again. And now, I want you to tell me everything that has happened since I left home—everything that has happened since I have been gone."

"I will leave that to Lucy. She can tell you all that has happened or is likely to happen," replied the overjoyed father.

"What do you think, father," asked Harry, "are you satisfied with the marriage, or would you rather that we should be married over again?"

"Dear me!" exclaimed Aunt Jane, "I don't see what good it would do."

"What do you say, father?" asked Tom of the old hermit.

"It might satisfy other people; for that reason I would advise you to get married over again. There are always a plenty of people that can find fault and would, perhaps, say things that you would not like."

Then we will have a double wedding," declared Aunt Jane.

"O Lucy!" cried Tom, throwing her arms about her sister's neck and kissing her fondly, "what is it? Ah, I know, I know—that blush tells the tale. It's Frank Kimball, I suppose—but when is it to be?"

"Day after to-morrow," said Aunt Jane.

So it was arranged, and on the following Wednesday a double wedding was celebrated at Cliffside.

Lucy went to her new home in town, as her husband was a prosperous merchant of Kimberly; and little Tom and Harry were left with the old people at the homestead.

Now, that Tom and Harry had returned, the wild and altogether exaggerated stories which were reported about the finding of rich diamond fields by Tom and Harry, and the story of 'The Star of Kimberly' were brought up afresh in the minds of the people. But, of course, these exaggerated stories were soon dispelled by the facts concerning the finding of the stone. A stone which was known to have been discovered at Kimberly and lost there in the mountains some twenty-five years before.

There is a long and bloody tale connected with this

stone and there is also a tale of blood and suffering connected with little Tom, and the two are so connected and interwoven as to make them inseparable.

"The Star of Kimberly"—what is it?

Those who have followed me through this bit of personal history—no, not altogether imaginary, for it is founded upon facts—will be divided in their opinion, no doubt, as to which is really the "The Star of Kimberly." Some will say that it is little Tom, others will say that it is the great diamond.

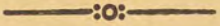
To those who are satisfied with calling little Tom "The Star of Kimberly," nothing more need be said. Her troubles are ended, or at least are so small that they occasion her more pleasure than otherwise—her cup of happiness is full. She has passed down that broad and winding road that so many have traveled; she has passed through the beautiful meadows where grows the wheat and corn; she has crossed the babbling brook upon whose flowery banks the lovers ramble; she has passed on beyond all these, when she might have paused or turned back. She has climbed the mountains with a steady and unfaltering step—the mountains where the thunders roll and the lightnings clash; where the chasms yawn, in whose dark and unfathomable depths lie buried the wreck of human hearts; she has passed all these, and now unscathed, triumphant, glorified, she stands upon the mountain peaks of love from whence, in her vision of happiness untarnished, she beholds the gates of the Golden City which, standing ajar, allows her a glimpse of heaven—allows her to drink from the cup of the consummation of all earthly bliss. Below her the avalanche

sweeps, the torrents rush, the lightnings flash, the thunders roll, the chasms yawn and temptation lies writhing in the dust. She has soared on beyond and above them all and now, with unsullied wing, she rests in peace—her cup of happiness is full.

To those who, for motives of their own, prefer to place the diamond upon the throne, my story is unfinished.

I say, in all candor, let the friends of little Tom pause here, there is nothing more for them.

While to those that love the diamond—I glory in your spunk—I will devote yet another chapter or two.



CHAPTER XXVII.

ANOTHER CHAPTER.

The winter had passed and the warm days of summer had come. Strange may it seem to us here, but it was the first of January. A beautiful, bright summer morning, and all nature was clothed in gorgeous green and decked out in its myriads of variegated and beautiful flowers. The old homestead never seemed so bright and beautiful before; the birds sang their sweetest and most joyous songs and every one at Cliffside wore a happy smile.

Sometime during that beautiful, starlight night, a wee little creature, as if borne from heaven upon angel wings in search of a new home, paused in his weary flight and rested upon the fair, warm bosom of little Tom. One could hardly tell, as yet, whether it was of earth or of heaven—such a wee, little creature. But, O how happy was little Tom, as she felt for the first time its warm, sweet kiss.

The birds poured forth their glad, joyous songs of greeting; the soft, summer breeze, loaded down with sweet perfume stolen from flowery dells, stole softly through the half open window and, like the breath of whispering angels, toyed with the soft, golden curls of little Tom, and whispered: "Mother." The bright, warm sun slanted his welcoming rays through the cur-



TOM WAS SITTING WITH HER INFANT DAUGHTER IN HER LAP. P. 199.

tained window and kissed the sweet, red lips of mother and child; and again the sad sea-waves, as they beat upon the lonely shore of the deserted island home, moaned soft and low: "Happy, happy mother. Happy, happy little Tom."

* * * * *

Three months has passed since that bright, happy morning that little Tom awakened to find herself a mother—three months, and it was the sixth of April, one of those bright, beautiful, autumn days that one loves so well; and little Tom, sitting beneath the spreading branches of an old oak in front of her old home at Cliff-side with her little infant daughter in her lap, was watching her queer, little antics when Harry, coming in from the field, paused to look at the fair picture.

"Harry," said Tom, with a smile of welcome, "come and sit down with me a little. I want to talk to you. Do you know, Harry, we have been married just a year to-day; and then she said with a laugh, "Our Angie (Angel) is just three months old to-day. Aunt Jane says, and I guess other people think so too, that we have been remarkably industrious. But, O Harry! I thank God, I am so glad that our little baby came when she did. She comes to us as a pledge of vows we made that day—just a year ago to-day, Harry. Though I may live to grow old, the memory of that day will ever be fresh and young in my heart; though I may live to see her grow up and have children of her own, too, I will always, when I see her, remember the vows we made that day when, in our little home, God promised her to me.

"Yes, it was just one year ago to-day, Tom, and I am just—no, not just, but a thousand times more ready to renew my vows than I was to make them then. This little one only binds our hearts the closer, Tom. Yes, she has become to us as a pledge of our vows we made that day. She will always remind us of our promises to one another—ah, I wonder who that is?" asked Harry, as three men drove up to the gate and stopping, one of them stepped from the wagon and advanced toward them.

"They are strangers," said Tom, "I never saw them before."

The stranger, a tall, handsome young man, advancing to the happy group, raised his hat in courtesy to the young mother and child, then bowing to Harry, said:

"Mr. Lovell, I believe?"

"Yes," answered Harry, "and may I have the pleasure?"

"Lovell is my name," he answered, "a distant relative—Fred Lovell."

"Indeed, cousin Fred—if you will permit me to call you so—I am most happy to meet you. You came from New York, I believe?" said Harry.

"Yes, I came from New York and I would be most happy to claim cousinship with you, and—" turning an inquiring glance upon little Tom.

"It is my wife and baby," answered Harry.

"Ah," he said, taking her proffered hand, "and so this is the famous little Tom. Indeed, cousin Harry, I congratulate you, though it may be a little late, upon the possession of such a beautiful wife and baby."

"Thank you, cousin Fred, both for your congratulation and compliment of my treasure."

"Treasure! yes, indeed, if the story that I have heard is true—she is a treasure. But that word brings me back to the business part of my visit. Business first, they tell us, and pleasure afterwards. I am at the head of a company—fortune hunters, you will call us—organized to go to Australia. But hearing this story, while at the Cape, we came here to see what we could learn; and when I learned who it was, I knew that you must be one of uncle Henry's family and a cousin of mine, so I came over to see you."

"I am glad that you came," said Harry. "My father will be glad to see you, too. He told me that he had a sister living in New York, but he had not heard from her for nearly twenty years."

"The first thing that I want is your advice as to what the prospect is for us here. We heard about the finding of a great diamond, and it is believed that there are more of them up there in the mountains where that one came from. But I didn't know, until I reached Kimberly, who it was that found it. Now, what do you say? Can you give us any encouragement, either in the direction of the discovery of new fields or the recovery of the lost treasure?" he asked.

"Well, the story of the finding of the stone, as generally told about here, is about true—we found it and lost it. As to the prospect of finding new mines, there is none. We found the stone in the dry bed of a mountain stream, and it may have been brought down from away up in the mountains."

"Then you think that there is no prospect in that direction?"

"No," replied Harry. "This same stone was found here at Kimberly, and was lost up there. There's a long tale of murder and bloodshed connected with this stone. My father and five other men found it, or rather it was shown to them by an old Kafir, who called it the 'Devil's Eye,' but father will tell you all about that part of it."

"There's a story of crime and suffering, I think, connected with nearly all large diamonds," said Fred.

"Yes," replied Harry, "they are too valuable to handle in a country like this."

"Do you think that there's any prospect of recovering the stone?"

"I don't know; I think that it's very doubtful."

"Then there is a little chance?" he asked eagerly.

"One chance, perhaps, in a thousand."

"And now, cousin Harry, what is that chance worth?" persisted Fred.

"What is it worth?"

"Yes, what is it worth? What will you take for your interest in the stone?"

"You will have to talk to Tom about that; it belongs to her, or did before she lost it."

"What do you say, cousin Tom?" he asked.

"I won't have anything to do with it!" replied Tom. "You are welcome to it if you can find it. I don't lay any claim to it now; we have lost it and that's the end of it. I wouldn't touch it again for anything in the world!"

"You don't value it very highly, it seems," he said.

"No. It has been a curse to us and to every one that has ever had anything to do with it, and will, I believe, continue to be to every one who has anything to do with it hereafter. No, no, I wouldn't touch it again—never! I threw it away when we left the ship. But, if you are tired of life and want to die, go find that cursed thing! From the moment your fingers touch it, you will be under a spell that will follow you as long as you are in possession of that bloody gem."

"That is not very encouraging, my little cousin," he said.

"I am afraid, though," said Harry, "that there's more truth in her words than we are willing to believe."

"If, then, you refuse to accept anything for your interest in the stone, can we arrange to get you to go with us and locate the place, as near as you can, where the ship lies?"

"O sir!" cried little Tom, pale and trembling.

"There can be no danger," urged Fred, "we will take you to the island; and you need have nothing to do with it; you will be just as safe there as here."

"Give us a little time to study over the matter," said Harry. "I will talk to Tom about it and if we can help you, we will let you know to-morrow just what we will do. But come, you will stay with us to-night, father will tell you something that may be of interest to you. Let us attend to your team and take your friends to the house."

"They will return to town. I will stay with you, for I want to see uncle Henry and hear the story of that diamond," he said.

And after introducing Harry to his two friends and seeing them off for town, he went to the house and was soon introduced to the family.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTER SUPPER.

Supper was soon announced; and seating themselves at the table, they engaged in the ordinary conversation incident upon the meeting with friends or relatives from a far away country, whom they had not seen before or for a long time. Many questions were asked and answered till, finally, they arrived at the then present time.

"Ah, yes," said the old hermit, "many have come here to seek their fortunes—some have found it, many have not. But this is a good country; you could do no better than to come here."

"I would like to hear the story of the finding of that diamond, providing, of course, you feel like telling it," said Fred.

"Yes, yes," said the old man, "you are like all the others that come here to seek their fortunes—it is diamonds, great diamonds that you are looking for. Yes, I know how it is myself, for I came here with that ambitious hope, twenty-five years ago. I was a young man then, and I came as you have, to seek my fortune. I, in company with five others, went into the mines, but were unsuccessful; and after spending what little money we had, we set out in search of new fields. Weeks and months of hardship and suffering passed, still we found nothing. Wandering about the country, we finally came here and camped by the shore of the little lake out there.



SHE RETURNED TO HER DEAD LOVER, AND PLUNGED A DAGGER INTO HER HEART. P. 205.

One day, some six weeks after we arrived here, an old Zulu Kafir, sick and nearly dead, came to our camp and asked us to help him. We took him in and cared for him as best we could till he got well and then we learned from him a strange tradition that was current among the Zulu tribe."

"For a great many years, so many that the first knowledge of its existence was buried in obscurity, a strange and mysterious light appeared at certain times of the night, always in the same place and could be seen only from a certain place. Strange to say, that particular locality had been the scene of a terrible and bloody tragedy. At the time of the tragedy, the Zulus were a powerful and intelligent people, ruled over by a young and beautiful queen, whose hand was sought by the young prince of the Kafir nation, then at war with the Zulus. This love affair led to the tragedy. As near as the Zulu could tell it, the prince kidnapped the fair queen; and while fleeing with his prize was overtaken upon that very spot where the strange light appeared, and at the precise time when it ever after appeared—surrounded by the friends of his rival, an old man and a near relative of the girl who aspired to the throne. After a long and fierce struggle the young man was overpowered and his body left to be devoured by the vultures and wild beasts. The next night the young queen made her escape, and returning to her dead lover, plunged a dagger into her heart and thus ended her life."

"The superstitious fancies of the Zulu had no particular charm for me, but I wished afterward that I had believed more of what they told me. One thing that he

told us was, that the peculiar and baneful light reflected by the mysterious object, which they called the 'Devil's Eye,' exerted such a baneful and mysterious power over anyone who came within the pale of its deadly influence, that they would ever after be haunted by the blood-thirsty demons and would sooner or later fall a victim to their wicked malice."

"But it was not these traditions that interested me; we gave no credence to the superstitious fancies of the natives. What interested us was, the cause of that mysterious light. We concluded to investigate the matter; so, in company with the old Zulu, we repaired to the only spot where the mysterious light could be seen. At the exact time that the old Zulu said the light could be seen, sure enough it appeared."

For several days we searched for the source of that mysterious light—a light which we were thoroughly convinced was reflected from a great diamond. 'What else could it be?' we asked ourselves. But why it could be seen only at a certain time of the night, was a mystery which we could never account for. It was easy enough to see and understand why it could only be seen from a certain point, for the light fell upon it in such a way and it occupied such a position that it could be seen from no other position."

"It was a very difficult matter to locate the exact spot from whence the light came, as it was nearly a half mile away and in the midst of a broad, gravelly valley, nearly in the center of the present diamond fields of Kimberly. But, at last, we succeeded in locating the place and soon found ourselves in possession of the largest diamond found at Kimberly. It had been said that the first

diamond found here, was found by a herder boy while tending his herd; but that is not true, for he found that stone more than a week after we found this one. The stone is as large as a common hen's egg, oval in shape and is blood-red in color."

"We felt that our fortunes were made, and with light and happy hearts we set out on our return to the Cape. But from the very first it seemed that some blighting curse had fallen upon us. Within two hours after finding the stone, one of the boys was caught and killed by a lion, while we were passing along the little brook just at the foot of the cliff yonder. That night, one of the five that was left disappeared and was never seen nor heard of afterwards. The four of us set out then for the Cape as fast as we could go and had almost reached the town when we were set upon by a band of outlaws, and my three companions were killed and I was left for dead."

"I told the story of the diamond and in less than a week the whole country was alive with people."

"The outlaws were hunted from the day they got possession of that stone till the last man had perished, but the diamond was not recovered. The last of the outlaws fled away into the mountains and when overtaken, threw the diamond into a rushing torrent rather than allow us to recover it."

"But, Uncle Henry, do you believe that there could possibly be anything in that stone, or about it, that could exert such an evil influence?" asked Fred, incredulously.

"I leave you to draw your own conclusions. No man has ever yet escaped unless he gave it up. You have

heard the story of the 'Star of Kimberly.' From the day little Tom found it, down to the Port Orange tragedy, fifteen men had lost their lives principaly because of it. Harry nearly lost his life within two hours after they found it. He never had it more than six hours after going aboard that ship, till a storm came up and wrecked the ship and destroyed the lives of fifty people."

"But certainly uncle, that couldn't have had anything to do with that storm. Men may murder one another for it, but it certainly could not exert such an influence as to bring up a storm and destroy a ship and crew,' declared Fred.

"Draw your own conclusions. I know this much. if Captain Marlin had known that Tom and Harry had that stone in their possession, he would never have allowed them to come aboard his vessel."

"Well, I will take my chances on it anyway. If I can find it, I will risk but what I can take care of it. I think that the great danger lies in letting it be known to others. There are six of us, and besides Tom and Harry, no one else will ever know that we are looking for it. We will go there and recover it if we can, taking care that no one else knows anything about what we are doing; we will even avoid being seen near the island."

Thus the plans for the save recovery of the treasure were lain and the young fortune hunter waited only for a favorable decision from little Tom.

Till late into the night, Tom and Harry talked the matter over and finally, though with many misgivings upon the part of little Tom, it was decided that they would go to the island.

"Well then," said Fred, after receiving his answer the next morning, "I shall expect you day after to-morrow; and now, as I have to return to-day, I will bid you good-day."

Three days later, Tom and Harry stood upon the deck of the little yacht, "Lady Maud," as she weighed anchor and sailed proudly out of Table Bay on her mission.

Six days later, she dropped anchor under the lee of the huge pile of bleek and barren rocks upon which the gallant ship, "Cape Town," was lost that dark and stormy night.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

ANOTHER VICTIM.

In a few days after reaching their destination, everything was ready for the search. A comfortable tent had been erected upon the barren and lonely island, in the most sheltered and most pleasant spot that could be found. No pains were spared to make it cheerful and homelike. But the awful fate of her shipmates that had perished there, cast such a shadow of melancholy about the place that it made the heart of little Tom sink with sadness.

From the door of their tent a good view of the field of operations was had; and sitting there, Tom and Harry watched day after day the progress of the work.

Five days had passed and, as yet, no signs of the wreck had been found. But upon the sixth day, a dark and stormy day, the signal flag that was to announce the discovery of the ship, was displayed at the mast-head of the little yacht. It was about eleven o'clock when Tom, looking from the door of her tent, saw the signal.

The wind was so high and the sea so rough, that nothing more could be done that day; so Fred came up to the tent to bring the good news. Rushing up to the tent, he cried out excitedly—

"We have found her, we have found her!"

"O Fred," cried Tom, with tears in her great, blue eyes, while her voice trembled with emotion. "O Fred, I am afraid something is going to happen—"



TOM AND HARRY WATCHED DAY AFTER DAY THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK. P. 210.

"Happen!" interrupted Fred, "bet your sweet life that something is going to happen, my dear little cousin!" he cried, almost beside himself with excitement and eagerness.

"Fred," said Harry, quietly, "don't get excited over this thing. Keep cool; a little excitement, a little carelessness may result in a serious and perhaps fatal accident."

"Don't fear, Harry, I will guarantee there will be no accident because of any carelessness upon my part," he answered.

All the remainder of that day and all the next, the wind blew a perfect gale, so nothing could be done; but the next day was calm and the fortune hunters set to work with a will. As the day was so pleasant and the sea quiet, Tom and Harry went aboard to watch the progress of the work.

Everything went off smoothly and quietly until about ten o'clock, when the signal that was to announce that the treasure had been found, was given. In a moment, Fred and his partner who had the handling of the air pump, were so excited as to be totally unfit for the delicate task of managing the pump.

Tom and Harry were in the cabin, and as soon as the commotion was heard, Harry rushed upon the deck and in a tone of stern command, shouted—

"What in the name of God does all this excitement mean? Away with such boyishness!"

Just then a cry of alarm from Tom, drew Harry's attention to her.

"Look, look!" she cried. "O Harry, the men have dropped the signal lines and there's no one at the pump!"

"We've got it, we've got it!" fairly yelled the excited Fred, as with eager feverish haste and forgetting everything else in his intense excitement, he drew up the line to which the treasure was tied.

"Great God, man," cried Harry, seizing Fred and giving him such a shake as to nearly dislocate his neck, "get to the pump quick, quick, quick! What in thunder do you mean? Up with that diver, quick, you idiots!"

"O my God!" wailed little Tom, "another victim added to the list!"

"Perhaps not, Tom," said Tom encouragingly; "there, there, don't cry, Tom! Run back to the cabin, I can hear your baby crying.

"O Harry!" cried Tom, as Harry entered the cabin a few minutes later.

"He is dead," replied Harry sadly.

"Another victim!" groaned Tom. "O Harry, I can never forgive myself for consenting to do this thing!"

"It is not our fault, Tom," he answered, "so say no more about it."

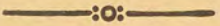
This terrible accident, and the fact that it was caused by pure carelessness, though under a fit of uncontrolable excitement consequent upon the recovery of that valuable treasure, cast such a gloom over that little band of adventurers, that they became well-nigh demoralized; and to this state of affair, was, in a great measure responsible the accident which followed.

The day had been calm and pleasant and, but for the sad fate of poor George Peabody, the diver, and a member of the company of fortune hunters, would have

passed merrily in spite of the sad face and warning voice of little Tom.

But the day which had dawned so bright and with such bright prospects of success, was destined to end in yet another disaster.

Already, so it seemed, the shadows of doom hovered about them; and, as darkness settled down upon the bleak and barren island, it shut out from the view of our two soung friends (Tom and Harry), and forever, the proud, beautiful, little yacht, which had borne them so gallantly to that ill-fated island.



CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

The night had closed down dark and ominous, boding ill to the unwary mariner who might be caught unprepared. It was, in fact, just such a night as, little more than a year before, had closed in around the doomed ship—Cape Town—and shut her out from the world forever.

As darkness closed down on the placid, shining waters of the great ocean, hiding the Lady Maud from view, Tom turned from the door where she had been standing, watching the sun go down beyond the veil of dark, leaden clouds, just peeping above the dark line where the sea and sky meets and, bending low over her sleeping babe, kissed her sweet, red lips. Her cheek was pale and there was that same sad look, that mournful expression in her wide, beautiful eyes that so often before, in times of danger and suffering, had wrung Harry's heart with a keen pang of anguish and pity for the brave, tender-hearted, little girl.

"Tom, come here," said Harry.

Hastily brushing away a tear that had fallen upon the sweet, little face of the sleeping baby she instantly obeyed.

"Tom, I want you try and not worry so much over what has happened here to-day. It was to be; and what is to be, will be, and there's no help for it. I tell



A FOOT-SORE AND WEARY TRAVELER, COMING SLOWLY DOWN THE LONG, OAK AVENUE. P. 218.

you, Tom, that fate decreed that we should come here —it was to be and we couldn't have done otherwise. Tom, arn't you willing to submit to the will of Him who writes the destiny of man ?"

"O Harry, I don't mean to complain, but I can't help it Harry. I feel sad ! But it is not altogether what *has* happened, but oh, it is what *may* happen ! Harry, I feel that we have not seen the end of this yet."

"Don't borrow trouble, Tom; don't prophesy !" said Harry.

"Don't go back on your own preaching, Harry," said Tom; "for according to your own theory, I can't help to do what I do—it is to be, you know, and it will be— I can't help it !"

"That's so, Tom; you have got the better of me this time, and I will give up," declared Harry.

Just then a low moaning was heard; it sounded like the low mournful sighing of the distant sea. Closer and closer it came. Louder and louder and yet more mournful it sounded. It was an approaching storm.

Silently, almost breathlessly the anxious and fearful friends sat and waited—waited and watched for the coming of the storm.

It came; and oh what a tempest ! Furiously, fiercely, it beat upon the rocks.

Pale as death and with an awful sickening feeling at heart poor little Tom sat, with her head resting upon Harry's shoulder and cried.

"Cheer up my little girl!" said Harry tenderly. "All may be well yet."

"O they will all be lost!" she moaned.

"The worst of it will soon be over," said Harry; "and I ought to go down to the shore and see if—if—"

"Yes, yes, Harry; go, and if any of them are cast ashore you may be able to save some of them."

Out into the darkness and the storm he went; hoping for the best but fearing the worst. He knew that the little yacht could never weather such a storm; but would any of the adventurous crew be able to reach the shore?

It was midnight; the storm had passed and Tom, sitting alone in her tent, awaited the return of Harry who had gone out into the storm, into the night, to try and see, if he could, if their fears concerning the little yacht and their five friends were in fact to be realized. He feared, in fact almost knew, that the yacht could never weather the storm—that she would be cast upon the rocks, but he had some hope for the crew—perhaps that they might yet reach the shore.

In the course of an hour Harry returned in company with two others who were carrying a third.

"O Harry!" cried Tom, wringing her hands in despair.

"He is not dead, Tom," said Harry encouragingly.

"But the others, Harry? Oh God, where are they?" she wailed.

But no one had the courage to answer.

"Two more!" she moaned.

And bowing her head upon the bed where her baby was sleeping, she burst into tears.

"Tom," said Harry, cheer up a little; let us be thankful that it is no worse. Come, stop your crying now—be brave, little Tom—"

"Yes, yes—only three more, Harry, that's all! But where is the diamond?"

"Here, Tom," answered Fred.

But the sight of the precious stone did not, could not cheer the aching heart—could not banish the horrible memory, the awful feeling of gloom which hovered about her. It seemed as if the evil one himself had taken possession of them and was bound to make them pay a dear price for their treasure; to make them suffer all the torments that his evil nature could devise.

But that wild and awful night had given way; and with the day which dawned bright and beautiful, came the welcome sight of an approaching ship. The signal of distress which floated from the highest point upon the desert island, had been seen and a boat was sent to their relief.

It was with a feeling of unbounded thankfulness, that they found themselves once again on shipboard and speeding swiftly away toward the Cape, which, in due time they reached in safety.

The next day, Tom and Harry bade good by to what was left of the successful fortune hunters and prepared to return to the old homestead at Cliffside.

Fred and his two friends were to take passage on board the first ship for Paris where they were going to dispose of the treasure.

"I will write just as soon as I reach Paris," said Fred, "and tell you all about our success in disposing of the stone and send a draft for the amount of your share."

"Give us your note, Fred, for fifty thousand dollars and you may have our share of the stone to dispose of for whatever you can get," said Tom.

"Do you mean it, Tom?" asked Fred, incredulously.

Of course I do," she answered. What do you say, Harry, do you agree to that?"

"Tom makes her own trades—I am satisfied," laughed Harry.

"All right then," he said; and giving Tom his note for the amount, he bade them a last good-bye.

Three days later, a report reached the Cape and was telegraphed to Kimberly, that the Pelican—the ship upon which Fred and his two companions had taken passage—had taken fire, when a day and a half out, and had burned to the water's edge. But fortunately, no lives were lost.

"Just think of it, Harry," cried Tom; "that diamond was aboard of that ship."

"It was fate, Tom, it—"

"It was the devil!" cried Tom, with blanched cheeks.

"Well, devil or no devil," replied Harry, "we will hear from Fred before long. I guess that he must certainly have been able to save the stone."

"I don't think so," replied Tom, I never believed that he would reach Paris with that thing. I don't believe that he ever will."

Nearly a week after the news of the disaster had first reached them, a delapidated, footsore and weary traveler, coming slowly down the long, Oak avenue, which was the pride and glory of Cliffside, turned in at the little

gate and staggered wearily up the graveled walk toward the cottage door.

Little Tom sat at the half open window sewing when she heard the traveler's slow and weary step upon the graveled walk. For a moment she scanned the delapidated traveler, then in a voice of surprise, mingled with doubt and fear, she cried—

"Harry, Harry! Run quick—here comes Fred!"

What more is there to tell?

Only this: Fred told the story of the burning of the Pelican, the fortunate and narrow escape of every one aboard, and concluding, he said—

"It was about midnight when the alarm was given; in a moment everything was confusion. Women and children screamed, men prayed, cursed and swore, while the officers strove with all their might to quiet the terror-stricken passengers."

"The first thing that I thought of was the diamond. I had wrapped it up in a little bundle and placed under my head; and the first thing that I did when awakened, was to look there for it. I raised the pillow and looked —it was gone."

"Thank God!" was the fervent exclamation of little Tom.

"Tom, please don't draw that $50,000 note on me till I have made another strike," said Fred; "for I am perfectly pennyless—not a penny to my name!"

Thus in mysery ends my story. But it must be so. If this tale was but the idle galloping of a still idler imagination, we would have brought, and with the

greatest of pleasure too, out all of our friends in wealth, basking in the sweet sunshine of beauty's smiles, and—and—but pshaw! it is not so, so what is the use of talking when you have nothing more to say.

CECIL JOHN RHODES.

That he is a man of no ordinary parts is evident from the fact that Editor Stead has awarded him the distinction of being the third greatest of living Englishmen, Gladstone and Salisbury alone being greater. But Sir Cecil's present greatness is not so interesting as the singularity and romance of his career. He is not only the greatest man in Africa, but the richest as well. He is only about 40 years old, but his wealth is estimated at $100,000,000.

Sir Cecil is the sole author of his own fortunes. Like nearly all the great men of the British colonies, he is Briton born. His father was an English clergyman. Cecil was the seventh son, and about the time of the great diamond discoveries at Kimberley went to South Africa fortune seeking. He did not achieve anything brilliant until he got up what is known in this country as a trust. In fact, Sir Cecil was one of the first men to form a trust, just as he was one of the first to reap the greatest profit from this form of modern aggrandizement. The Kimberley mines, which are now producing all the diamonds of commerce except those taken from two small mines in the Orange Free State, were controlled by rival companies—the De Beers syndicate and others.

Cecil acquired an interest in one of the richest of these mines—the De Beers—and in a few years rose to the presidency. The period from 1882 to 1889 was a time of great activity at Kimberley. In the former year the

famous Bultfontein diggings were first developed, and from that time forward the great Du Toit's Pan, De Beers and Kimberley mines, together with the smaller diggings in the neighborhood, were worked to their full capacity. The output was enormous. The markets of the world were flooded with precious stones, prices declined, and the shareholders noted an appreciable diminution in their dividends.

Now, a decline in dividends calls for heroic remedies. A diamond trust was demanded. Then Cecil Rhodes stepped to the front and accomplished what other and better-known financiers had been unable to perform. He reconciled conflicting claims and consolidated the mines in one grand syndicate with a capital of $19,750,000. The syndicate controlled the diamond market, and the dividends were saved. An idea of the princely character of those dividends may be obtained from the fact that in fifteen months $19,600,000 worth of diamonds were taken from the mines.

Cecil Rhodes became the hero of the hour. The King of Diamonds, people called him, and the glitter of the gems shed a halo over his fame. His services in the consolidatien were liberally rewarded, and his fortune has waxed as only a diamond king's fortune can.

In politics as in business, Cecil Rhodes succeeded where others had failed. His talents for organization and conciliation were again brought into play, and harmony between the Boers and English settlers—a consummation which older statesmen had deemed impossible —was effected. Cecil Rhodes became the premier and practical ruler of Cape Colony.

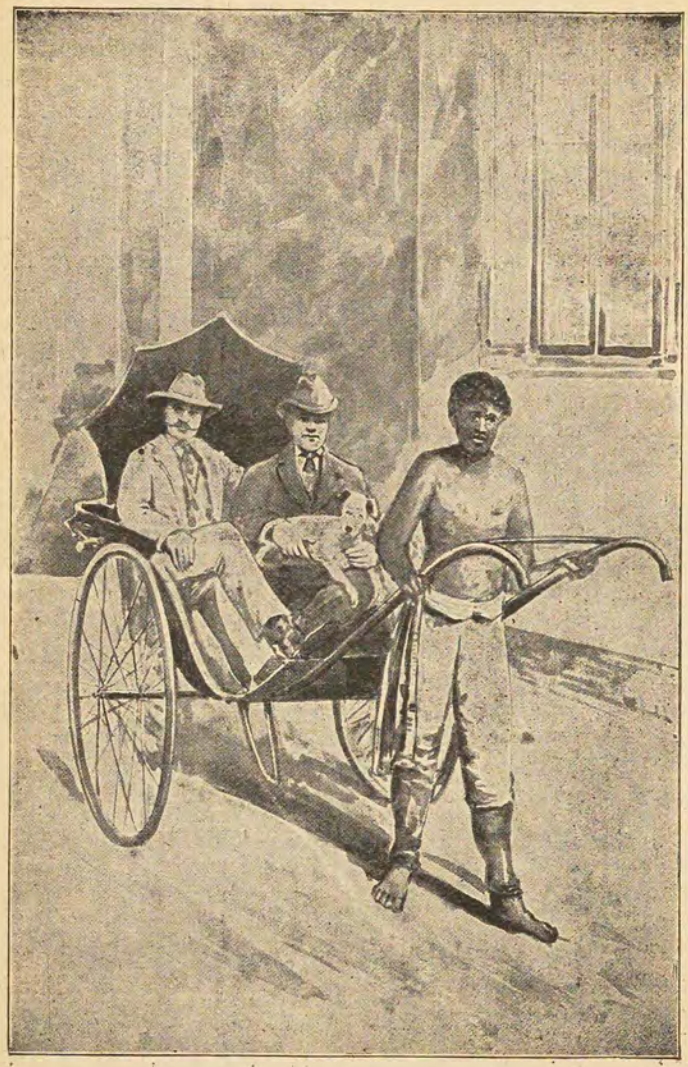
But his genius was not restricted to the ordinary channels of business and statecraft. While at work in Kimberley and Cape Town he nourished visions of an imperial province in that mysterious Eldorado north of the Transvaal which the eyes of few white men have ever beheld.

Frederick Selous, the veteran hunter and explorer, told him in enthusiastic phrases of the fabulous wealth of Mashonaland. Rhodes resolved to carry the British flag to the Zambezi.

He repaired to England. With the prestige of his coup at Kimberley and his supremacy in Cape Colony he had no difficulty in interesting certain influential capitalists in his scheme. He secured a charter from the crown and organized the Imperial British South Africa Company, with the Duke of Abercorn as chairman, Duke of Fife deputy chairman and Hon. Cecil John Rhodes as managing director. Certain half-forgotten concessions granted by King Lobengula in an incautious hour to men now dead and gone were revived and "consolidated under imperial authority." These antiquated concessions were repudiated by the savage monarch, but they gave the color of legality to the invasion of the whites which was presently organized.

Lobengula meant to resist the pioneer expedition of 1890, but he was outmaneuvered by Selous, and the party reached Mashonaland in safety. Then the Matabele king deemed it expedient to compromise, and peace was purchased. But the propinquity of the warlike Matabele was a constant menace to the settlers in Mashonaland. Moreover, the gold deposits of Matabeleland were of surprising richness, and the diggers cast lustful looks toward Buluwayo. The company, too, was in straitened circumstances, and needed to strengthen its hold on Zambezia. So when Lobengula's young bloods clamored for war the challenge was eagerly accepted, and the machine gun prevailed over the assegai. The chartered company's flag waves over Buluwayo, and 524,000 square miles have been added to the British dominions.

Verily, Cecil Rhodes is the man of the hour. Scipio Africanus was a pigmy compared with this modern hero of Africa.



BARNATO AS HE APPEARED AT THE ZENITH OF HIS CAREER

BARNEY BARNATO.

CONFLICTING STORIES OF HIS EARLY LIFE.

The place and date of birth and the early life of Barney Barnato, the South African "Diamond King," are hidden behind a veil which will, in all probability, never be drawn aside. Many vague and uncertain stories have been told concerning his origin. One version is to the effect that he was born of Jewish parents in the notorious White Chapel district of London, about the year 1852. There he became a juggler and contortionist, spreading his mat on the pavement wherever a crowd could be collected, and giving, with the aid of his brother, one of the usual exhibitions peculiar to the English metropolis. On the breaking out of the South African diamond craze the brothers sailed for Cape Town. Where the town of Kimberley now stands they gave open-air exhibitions with a trick donkey, and under a tent played "Hamlet" to audiences of easily satisfied miners. Here he amassed a fortune by diamond buying. Following precedents frequent on the stage, he assumed the name, Barney Barnato, his real name being Barnett Isaacs.

During the excitement which followed the thrillingly tragic death of the daring speculator Roland Barnett of Montreal, Canada, came forward with this version: "I am the eldest brother of Barnato, whose real name was Barney Isaac Alri Barnett. Our father was a musician, a connoisseur of paintings and a well-known picture restorer. For years he had charge of the estate of the

old Earl of Dudley. He gave all his children—three sons and one daughter—a first-rate education. Barney was educated at Heidelberg University. The reason he wore glasses was that he spoiled his eyes while studying the strange German characters. We parted in anger in England. Barney went to South Africa and engaged in mining. I came to Canada and engaged in banking."

Mrs. Blackman of Cleveland, O., claimed to be the daughter of Barney Barnato by his first wife, Anna Esther, with whom he lived fifteen years, in London. Later the couple went to Yagestrof, Poland, where they separated, the mother and daughter coming to America. This story was emphatically denied by Barnato's widow.

The "King of the Kaffir Stocks" never took the trouble to deny any of the many stories which have been published about him. He used to say the only foundation for the "circus story" was the fact that when he went to South Africa he frequently took part in private theatricals for the benefit of hospitals and similar charities. He had considerable ability in this direction, and his favorite roles in later years were Othello and Matthias, in "The Bells."

BARNATO AS A KOPJE WOLLOPER.

The King of the Kaffir Mines really laid the foundation of his mighty fortune by what is known in the diamond fields as "kopje wolloping." This is nothing more nor less than sharp trading. The kopje wolloper is a man possessing a good knowledge of values and a natural bent for turning this knowledge to the best account. He makes a business of visiting the mines and purchas-

ing diamonds from the diggers. He buys in the cheapest market he can find and sells in the dearest, and this is the way, it is generally believed, Barney Barnato made his start. He was a man of keen perceptions, of mental and physical courage, and possessed the faculty of absorption of ideas to an unusual degree. It is said of him by those who knew him best that he could apply himself to almost any study and become master of it in a much shorter time than the majority of men who were presumed to be his intellectual superiors. His perception as a trader stood him in good stead as a buyer of property, and he made a number of investments which later on proved the rare perspicacity of his mind.

BARNATO–RHODES COMBINATION.

The real rise of Barnato, however, dates from his connection with Cecil Rhodes, who was at that time the invalid son of an English clergyman, temporarily sojourning in South Africa. Rhodes' career is as dazzling in a way as that of Barnato. At the time their acquaintanceship began Rhodes was poor, but even his enemies conceded his genius, and he was ambitious to an extreme degree. It was a case of the communion of kindred spirits, and they formed a compact of the most daring nature. By methods known only to those in the deal, they forced down the price of diamonds until the gems were actually a drug in the market. The stocks of the various diamond mining companies fell in sympathy, and these were quietly absorbed by the combination, until one day South Africa awoke to the fact that Barnato and Rhodes, through capital which they controlled, were in

command of properties worth untold millions of money. Up went the prices of stocks again, and it was not long before the most famous mines of Kimberley were reorganized as a part of the property of the De Beers Mining Company, with a capital of $50,000,000. Barnato and Rhodes each held a large slice of the stock of this fabulously rich concern.

HAVING SECURED DIAMONDS, THEY SEEK FOR GOLD.

This leap from obscurity into fame and wealth would have satisfied ordinary men, but it was only a stepping-stone for the two leaders in the mad race for wealth in one of the wildest territories ever entered by man. The real opportunity of the Barnato-Rhodes combination came, in fact, after they had completed their diamond deals.

Africa is, in truth, the continent of mystery. Out of it for centuries had come stories of gold mines and mineral wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. Reports of the rediscovery of the mythical mines of King Solomon were frequent, and the existence of the riches of Ophir was always believed in by adventurous prospectors, whose bones are now bleaching on the desert plains of an almost unexplored region.

In 1886 South Africa was again flooded with wonderful stories of gold discoveries in the Witwatersrand district, near Pretoria, the Capital of the Transvaal, and about 300 miles north of Kimberley. Stories wilder than those characterizing the first California discoveries were accepted literally, and the Kimberley diamond miners went crazy over them. Houses and lands were aban-

doned, claims were forsaken, and an immense stream of caravans poured over the Veldt in search of the Promised Land. Scores of these gold seekers were afterward forced to return—heart-broken, foot-sore and weary; but the multitude, with that mad persistence which comes upon men to grasp fortune when she is seemingly lavish with her promises, raced through a country which had before been unable to afford more than a miserable subsistence to a few Boers and blacks, and staked out their claims by the hundreds.

FORESTALLED BY THE BARNATO CIRCLE.

Nine out of every ten of these eager prospectors found, to their amazement, that they had been forestalled. Barnato and Rhodes had, with consummate shrewdness, pounced down on the gold-bearing reef, which extended about forty miles from east to west, and had picked out the very heart of the rich ledges. Their claims occupied about two miles of the center, and every subterfuge possible under the extremely lax laws of the Transvaal was resorted to in order to make these claims legal. It was charged that Barnato's blood relatives, out to the tenth degree and back lineally for four generations, were represented as the owners of some of the claims; but, be that as it may, their titles were secured.

What has since then become known as the "Barnato Circle" began to exercise that wonderful control which has made South Africa a very toy in their hands. Barnato and Rhodes gave the confiding public a chance to become owners in some of the mines which they had so boldly usurped. The innate genius of Rhodes, aided by

the inherited shrewdness of Barnato, was revealed when they began organizing company after company, with capitals ranging from $500,000 to $5,000,000, and floating the stocks in European financial centers.

THE IMMENSITY OF THEIR SCHEMES.

As many as three companies under the Barnato régime were floated in one week, and wealth rolled into the coffers of the projectors of the multifarious schemes faster than ever. Every foot of ground lying out of doors became a veritable Golconda—on paper—when manipulated by the Circle; and the gullible public bought and bought faster than the shares could be issued from the printing presses.

The maddest speculative whirl of which any record is known set in. The Circle ran things with a high hand. It was "Black Friday" over again to the majority; but worthless shares rose as if by magic from an intrinsic value of not over 25 cents to $2, and then by bounds, measured actually by seconds and minutes, to $20, $50, $100, and even $300. Amazing as it now sounds, the shares of the Griqualand, West Copper, Asbestos and other mines advanced in one day from a few dollars to the highest figure mentioned; and the fever was not yet spent at this tremendous increase. All this time the Barnato Circle, which was receiving 60 and 70 per cent. of the capital of the companies for property rights, kept on unloading stock until it seemed that the most insatiable greed would have been satisfied many times over; but such was not the case.

JOHANNESBERG SPRINGS UP LIKE JONAH'S GOURD.

Johannesberg, the center of the gold district, was a second San Francisco, and affords the only instance where the wonderful history of Pithole, Pa., has been re-enacted. From a rude Kaffir settlement it grew to be a bustling city of 50,000 inhabitants—an American frontier city transferred to Africa. But under disadvantages which were hundreds of times harder to contend with than were those which marked the building of Pithole, Johannesberg grew and flourished. The nearest railroad was 300 miles distant, and it is said that every stick of timber, every nail, every pane of glass and every article of civilized manufacture had to be hauled across arid prairies by means of ox wagons. The "dollar-a-pound flour" stories of early California were true with respect to this latter-day reincarnation of the American gold camp; but Johannesberg never stopped a day in its growth. Inside of one year it had theaters, churches, magnificent buildings, and the Barnato Circle were seeing to it that it was to have more. American brains came into play here, for it was through the aid of a firm of which an American, Henry J. King, was the prime mover that the Barnato Circle obtained government concessions for the construction of street railways in the city of Johannesberg, were granted rights for electric lighting and secured water privileges for the whole district—worth in themselves millions of dollars.

THE BARNATO CIRCLE RULED THE GOVERNMENT.

Barnato and his aids did not stop at that. The Transvaal authorities were like mere children in the hands of

these men. They forced the President of the Republic to build a railroad several hundred miles long, from the Cape Colony frontier to Pretoria, and they treated with the government like kings.

Mashonaland and Matabeleland were their next objective points. Having first obtained a royal charter for the British South Africa Company, they then incited the Matabele war. The company promised rich gifts to its followers, and the conquest was soon complete. Poor, blundering King Lobengula was brushed away like a troublesome fly. The English government turned the province over to the company, which had assumed the cost of the campaign. The English boast that this was the only war the Empire ever waged without cost.

The indomitable members of the Circle were soon at work again. They had gotten out of London nearly as much as they thought the city could stand, and they next set Paris and Berlin crazy with their schemes. Millions again flowed into the company's hands.

BARNATO'S LAST COUP—FIRST MODERN BILLIONAIRE.

Barnato's last coup was the most astonishing in financial history. He put on the market the stock for the Barnato Bank, Mining and Estate Corporation (Limited). No prospectus was issued, nor was any statement made of the constitution, object or management of the institution. One or two preliminary deals were made, and then the stock was unloaded on the public at an advance which yielded the projector $10,000,000 in a single day. The demand for shares seemed limitless. Five-dollar shares sold in immense quantities at $22 before

business closed on the exchanges. It has been found a difficult task to obtain even approximate figures of the "Diamond King's" monumental wealth. Through the Barnato Circle he controlled upward of $1,000,000,000. This is more than the combined wealth of the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts and Goulds. He was undoubtedly the first real billionaire of modern times.

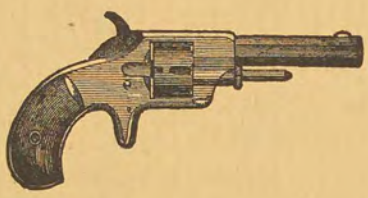
MENTAL COLLAPSE—SUICIDE—PERSONAL POINTS.

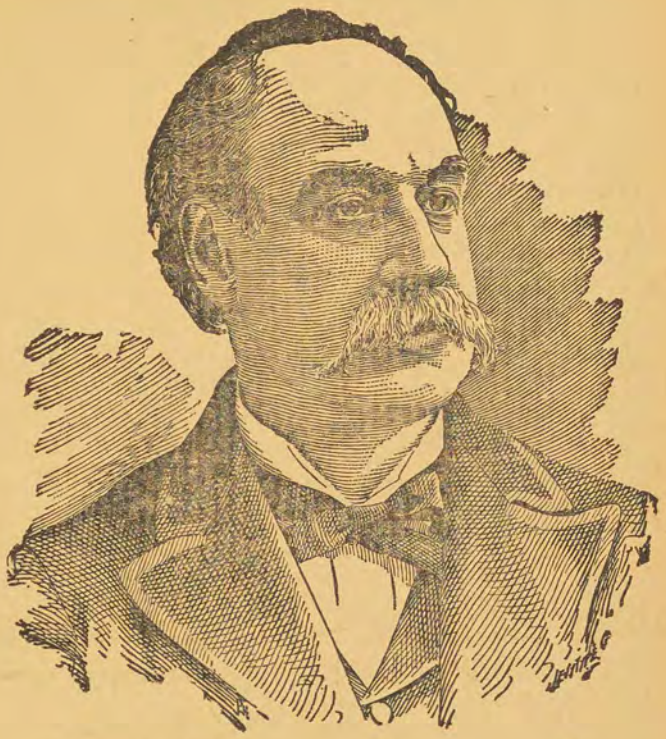
At the beginning of 1895 Barney Barnato stood at the zenith of his successes—apparently ready for coronation as King of Finance. But soon a slump in "Barnatos" set in, which could not be checked. Barnato, single-handed, spent $15,000,000 in one day, in a vain effort to brace his declining stocks. By 1897 the shrinkage in the market value of stocks issued by corporations which he organized had reached £34,000,000, or $170,000,000. Despite these reverses, he is believed to have died worth over half a billion.

But the tide was ebb—one on which Barnato had never before floated. His sudden retirement was explained by his friends as due to brain fever and a slow convalescence. But, in truth, his reason was dethroned and he was under close surveillance night and day. His family sailed with him from Cape Town for London, June 2, on the steamer Scot. A new and gorgeous palace, in the heart of fashionable London, was awaiting their reception. When near the port of Funchal, Island of Madeira, Barnato wrested himself from the protecting arm of his nephew and jumped overboard. His

body was recovered, and the steamer put into Funchal, whence the world was startled by news of the suicide.

Barnato left a widow, two sons and a daughter. He married in South Africa. Although unprepossessing in face and figure, he was genial and vivacious, and made friends readily. He was a patron of the drama and a frequent entertainer of dramatic celebrities. Charity was no stranger to him. On one occasion he sent the Lord Mayor of London $75,000 for distribution among the needy of that city.





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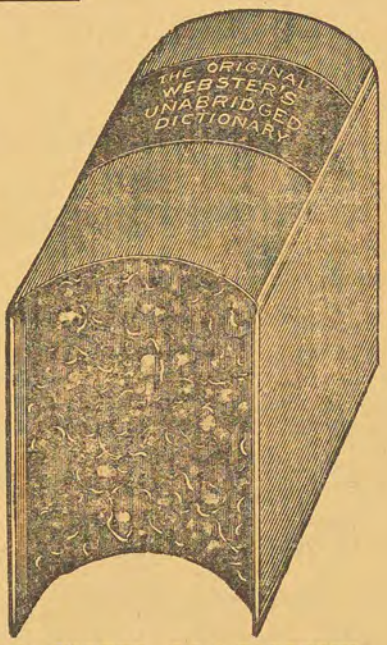
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